

Black Bear Management Plan

Public Input Summary



**Missouri Department of Conservation
July 2019**



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Executive Summary

- During July 2019, four open houses were conducted to gather public input on the draft of the Black Bear Management Plan. Open houses were held in Springfield, Van Buren, West Plains and St. Louis.
- Over 700 people attended the four open houses with over 400 people providing comments in person and almost 300 people providing comments online.
- 89% of respondents felt the Black Bear Management Plan was reasonable
 - Themes of those who did not feel the plan was reasonable include:
 - Do not support hunting
 - Hunting is not recreation or management
 - There are not enough bears
 - Hunting is inhumane
- 71% of the respondents have not seen a bear
- 89% of respondents would like to see a bear
 - Strong support to see black bears in the wild
 - Themes include:
 - Interest in viewing black bears
 - Value native wildlife and healthy ecosystems
- 87% of respondents supported a highly regulated hunting season
 - Strong support for a highly regulated hunting season
 - Themes include:
 - Best way to manage a bear population
 - Creates opportunities to get outdoors and create memories
- 13% of respondents did not support a highly regulated hunting season
 - Strong concern for a highly regulated hunting season
 - Themes include:
 - Do not support hunting
 - Number of bears are not accurate
 - Deal with human-bear conflicts before having a hunting season
- 37% of all respondents would be interested in harvesting a black bear
- Social media is the way most respondents heard about the open houses
- Over 84% of respondents agreed that Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is a name they can trust

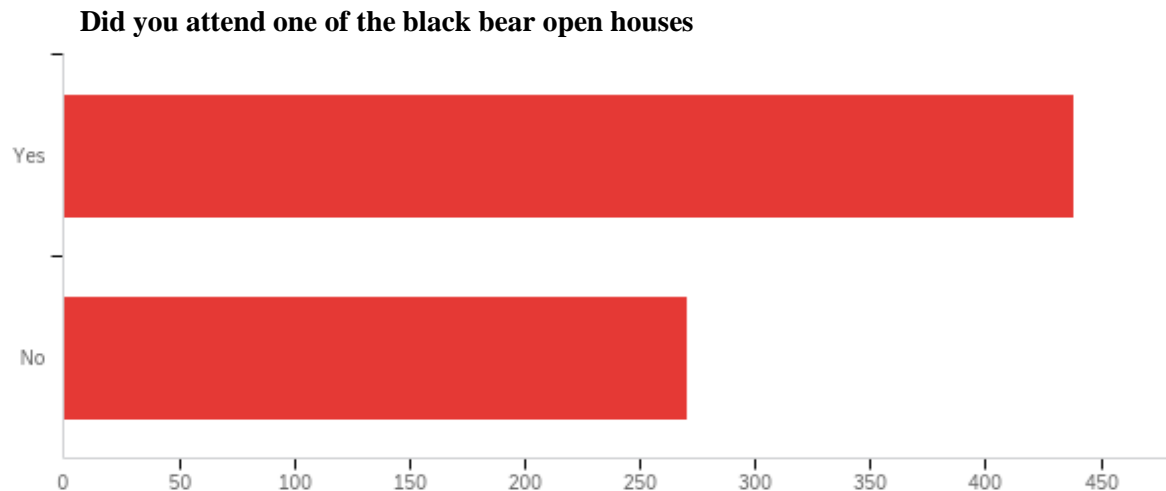
Responses Received from All Respondents, Open House Attendees, And Online Comments

Did you attend one of the black bear open houses?

All Respondents:

62% of all respondents attended a black bear open house

38% of all respondents did not attend a black bear open house



Black Bear Management Plan

Black Bear Management Plan Goals

Goal 1: Use science-based methods to manage a self-sustaining population of black bear, focusing on research and monitoring, population management, and habitat management.

Goal 2: Use human dimensions to inform management decisions related to recreational opportunity, and public opinion, interest and understanding of bears.

Goal 3: Minimize and address human-bear conflicts.

Goal 4: Increase statewide awareness of Missouri's black bear population and management program, through coordinated outreach.

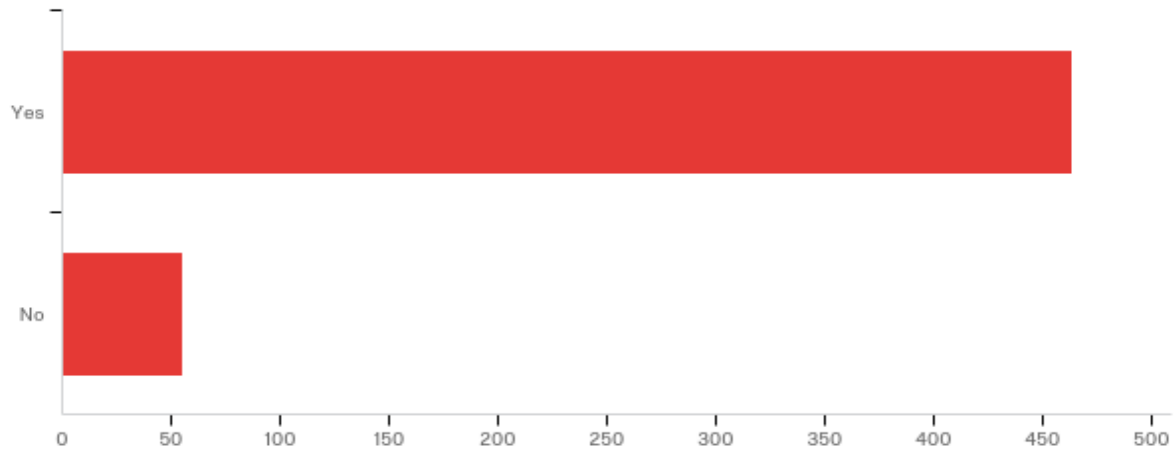
Overall, do you feel the goals and objectives of the Black Bear Management Plan are reasonable?

All Respondents:

89% of all respondents felt the goals and objectives were reasonable

11% of all respondents felt the goals and objectives were not reasonable

Do you feel the goals and objectives of the Black Bear Management Plan were reasonable?

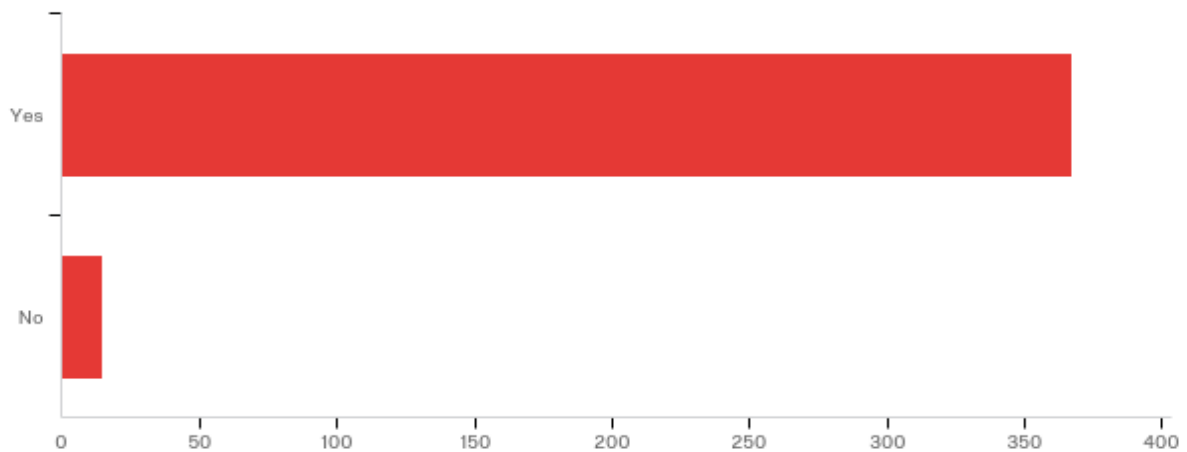


Open Houses:

96% of respondents felt the goals and objectives were reasonable

4% of respondents felt the goals and objectives were not reasonable

Do you feel the goals and objectives of the Black Bear Management Plan were reasonable?

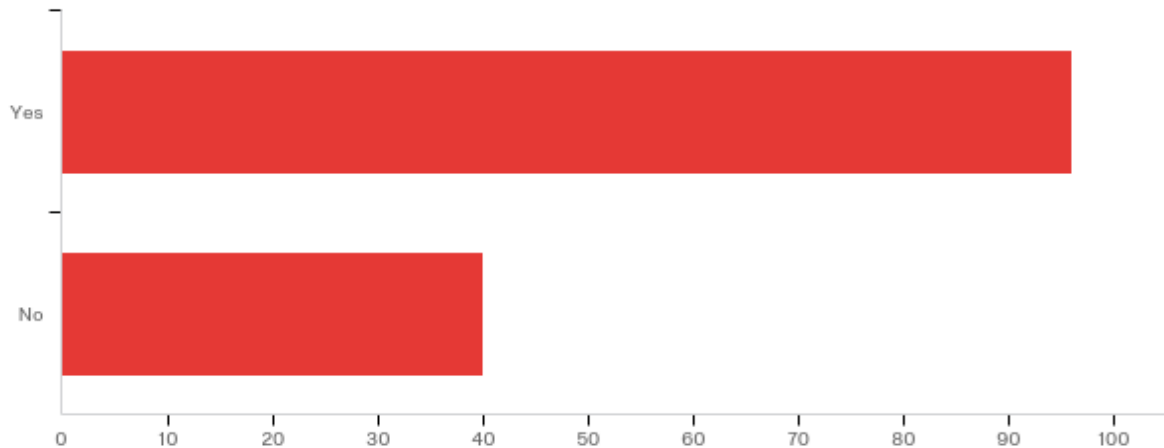


Online:

71% of respondents felt the goals and objectives were reasonable

29% of respondents felt the goals and objectives were not reasonable

Do you feel the goals and objectives of the Black Bear Management Plan were reasonable?



Why respondents felt the goals and objectives were not reasonable:

Themes include:

Do not support hunting
Hunting is not recreation or management
There are not enough bears
Hunting is inhumane

Additional comments regarding the Black Bear Management Plan's Goals and Objectives

Comments include:

Do not understand Goal 2
What is human dimensions?
Do not understand goal 2
Goal 2 is emotionally based
Concern/fear of bears
Educate the public
Address human/bear conflicts
Keep bears away from residential areas
Do not support bear hunting
Relocate, don't kill
Management should not include hunting
Black bear numbers are just coming back
Support black bear hunting opportunity
Looking forward to a hunting season
Amazing opportunity
Glad to see them coming back from the brink of extinction

Agriculture
Moving problem bears from one agricultural area to another is irresponsible
The bear population is at its threshold
Support hunting to protect livestock and honeybees

Black Bear Research and Management

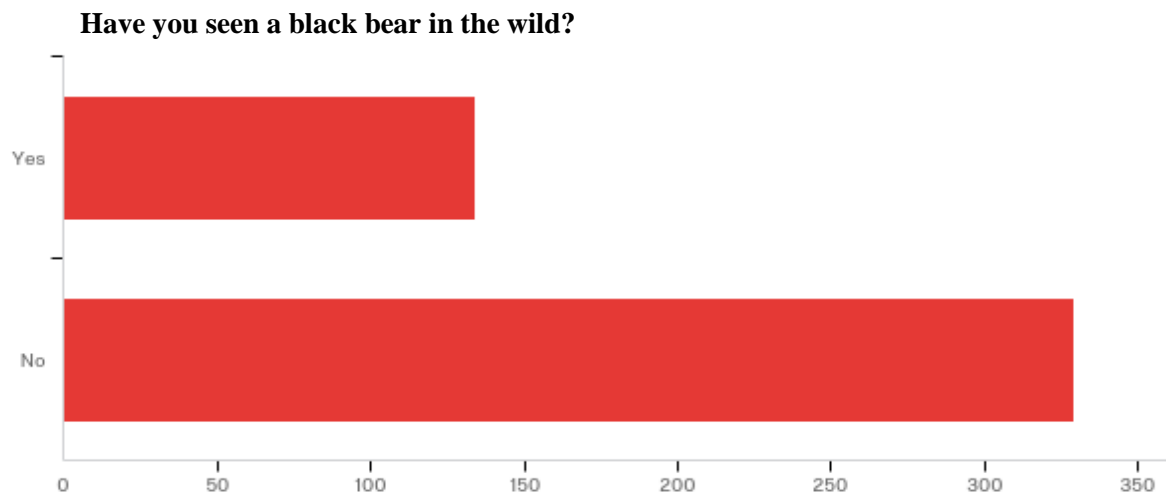
- Black Bear Research and Management
- Missouri's bear population is growing in size and expanding in range.
- Research indicates that Missouri is home to approximately 540-840 black bears.
- The 2008 Black Bear Management Plan established a benchmark of 500 bears needed for initiating a hunting season.
- Hunting will be the primary tool for managing bear populations within the levels of social tolerance and habitat availability.
- The Department will begin deliberations relative to establishment of a bear hunting season.

Have you seen a black bear in the wild?

All Respondents:

29% of all respondents had seen a black bear in the wild

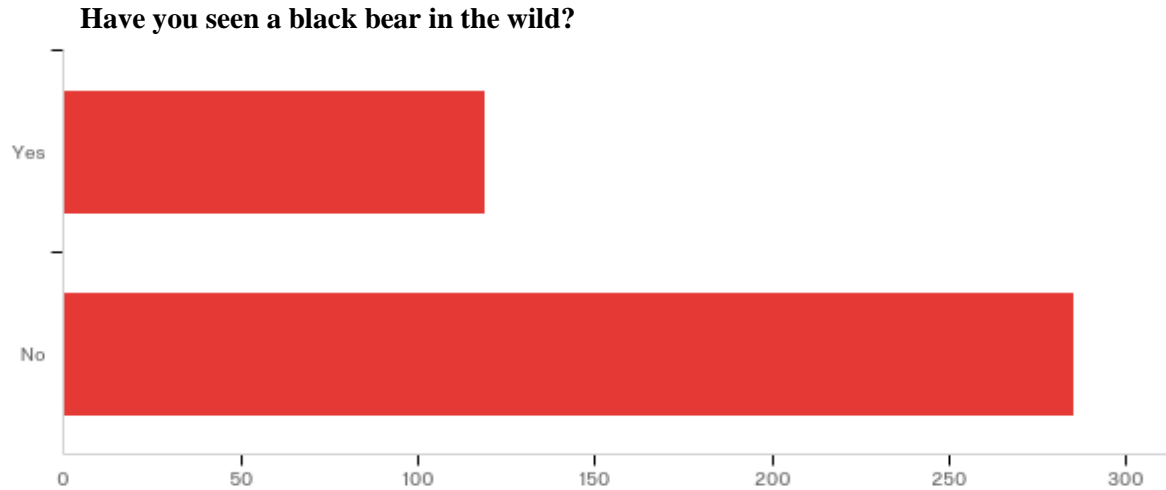
71% of all respondents had not seen a black bear in the wild



Open Houses:

29% of respondents have seen a black bear in the wild

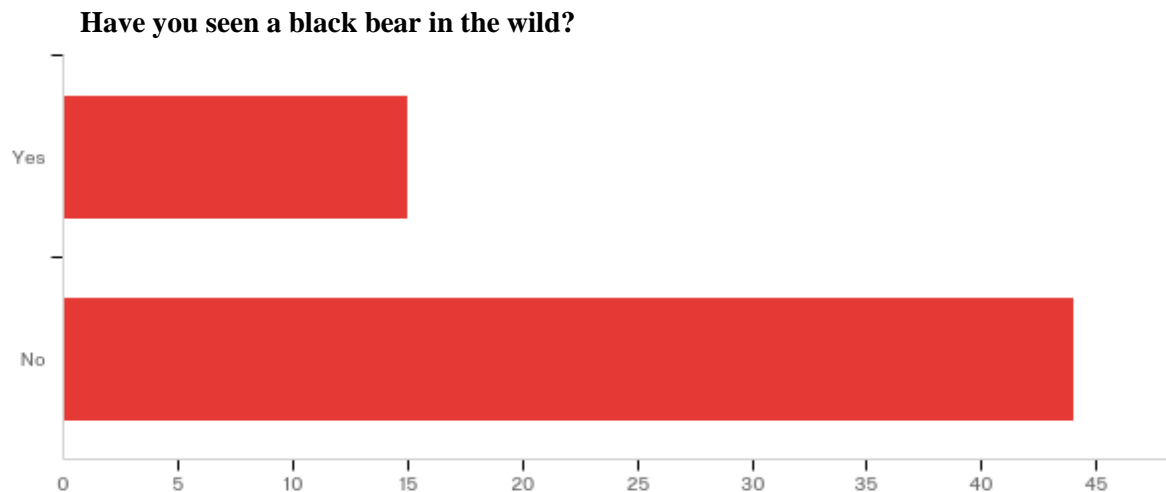
71% of respondents have not seen a black bear in the wild



Online:

25% of respondents have seen a black bear in the wild

75% of respondents have not seen a black bear in the wild



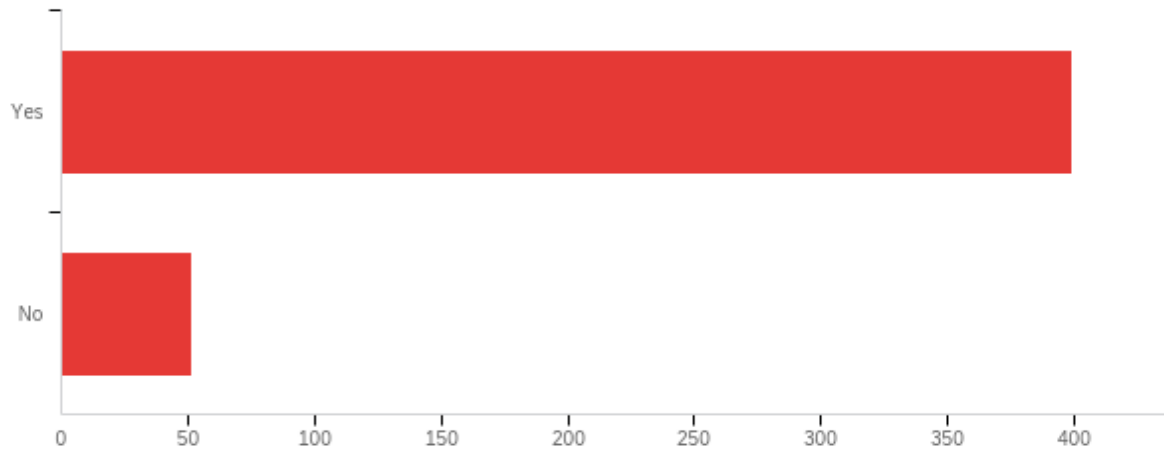
Would you like to see a black bear in the wild?

All Respondents:

89% of all respondents would like to see a black bear in the wild

11% of all respondents would not like to see a black bear in the wild

Would you like to see a black bear in the wild?

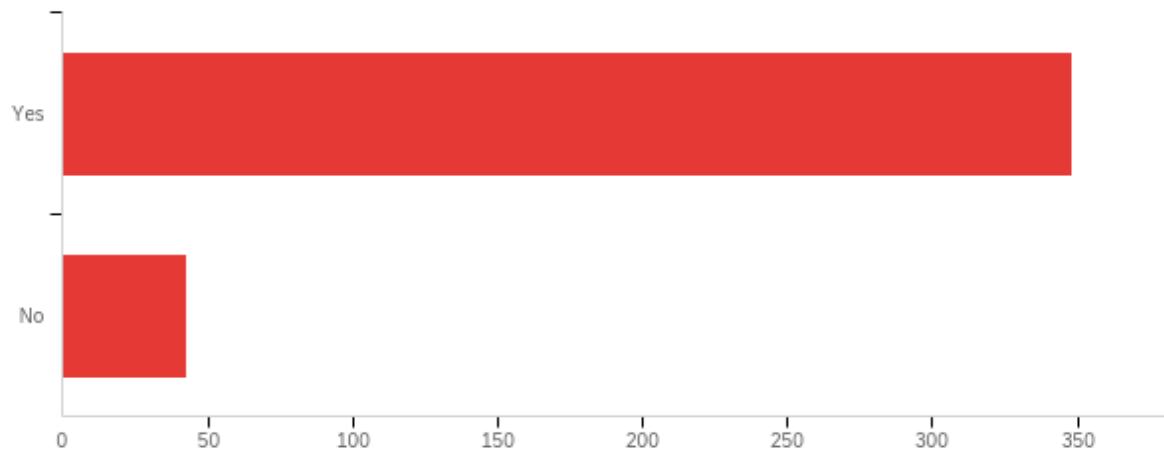


Open Houses:

89% of respondents would like to see a black bear in the wild

11% of respondents would not like to see a black bear in the wild

Would you like to see a black bear in the wild?

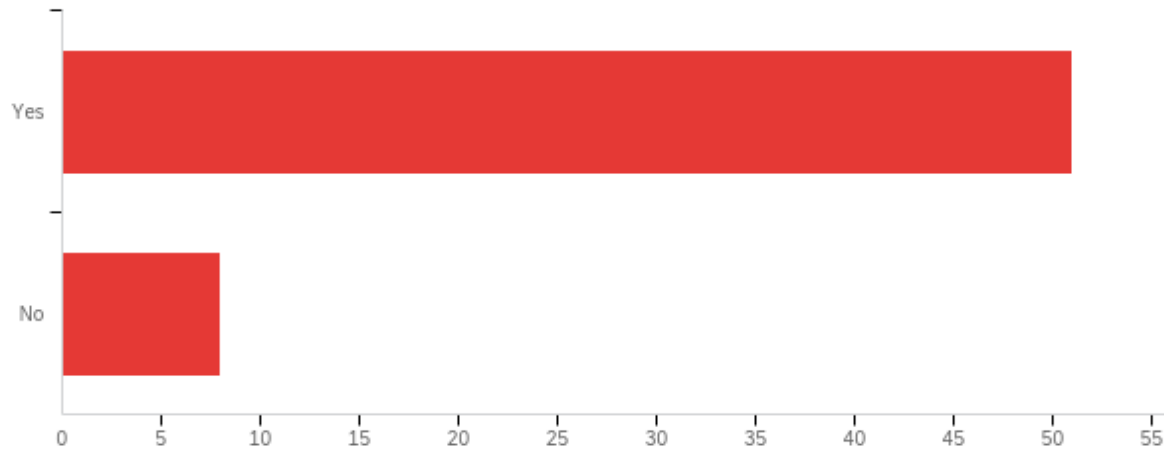


Online:

86% of respondents would like to see a black bear in the wild

14% of respondents would not like to see a black bear in the wild

Would you like to see a black bear in the wild?



Why would you like to see a black bear in the wild?

Strong support to see black bears in the wild

Themes include:

Interest in viewing black bears
Black bears evoke emotional connections such as: they are “loved”, “beautiful”, “neat”, “intrigue”, “fascinating”, “key species”, “very cool”, “interesting” and “impressive”
Would like to see black bears in the wild
Enjoy viewing nature
Respondents value native wildlife and healthy ecosystems
Having black bears back in Missouri helps with diversity and will bring wildlife back to its historical range
Hunting opportunities
It is a sign of improved forest health when the animals begin

Why would you not like to see a black bear in the wild?

Very few comments

Themes include:

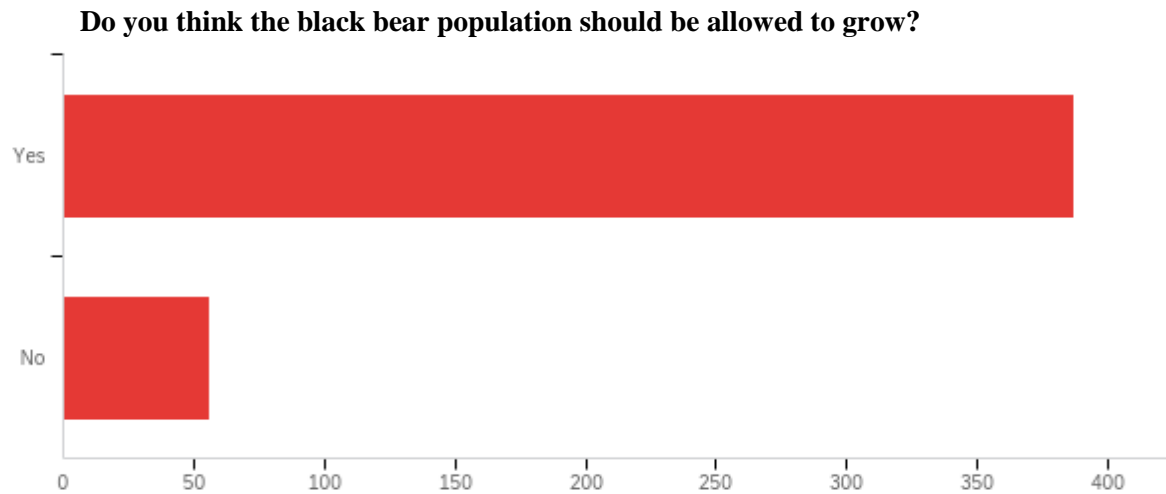
Fear
Increase human/bear conflict
Afraid of a confrontation with a bear
Concern they will become a nuisance

Do you think the black bear population should be allowed to grow?

All Respondents:

87% of all respondents think the black bear population should be allowed to grow

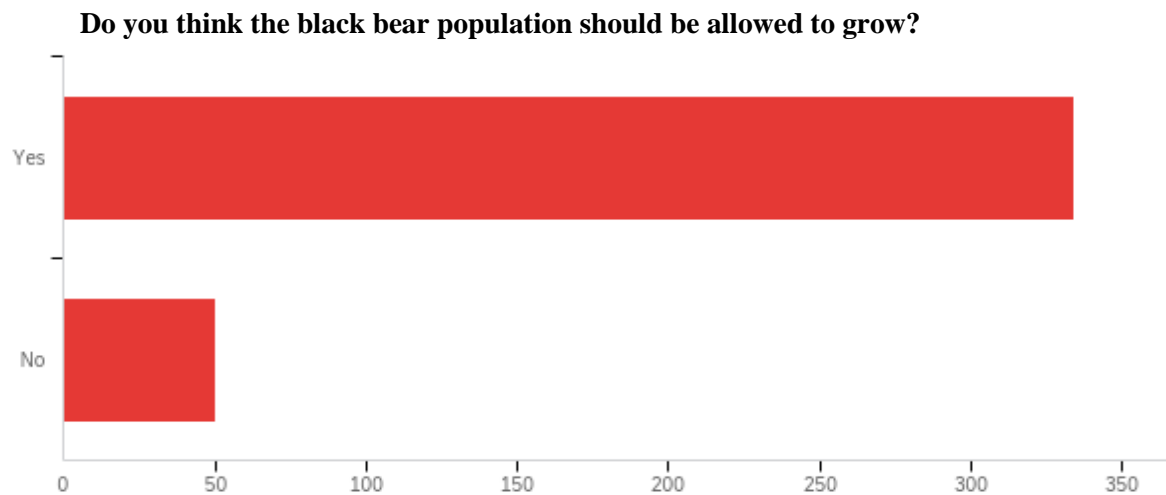
13% of all respondents think the black bear population should not be allowed to grow



Open Houses:

87% of all respondents think the black bear population should be allowed to grow

13% of all respondents think the black bear population should not be allowed to grow

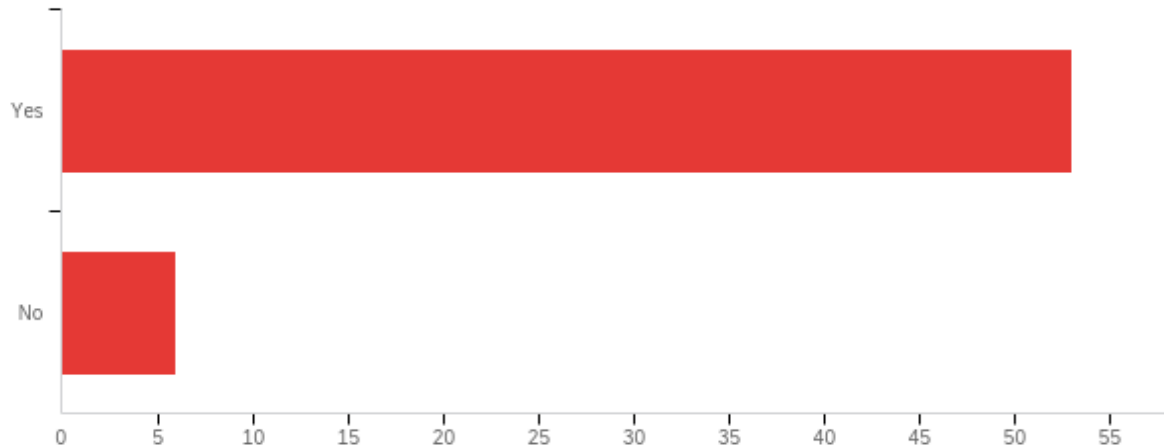


Online:

90% of all respondents think the black bear population should be allowed to grow

10% of all respondents think the black bear population should not be allowed to grow

Do you think the black bear population should be allowed to grow?



Why do you think the black bear population should be allowed to grow?

Strong support for allowing the black bear population to grow in Missouri

Themes include:

Black bears are part of the ecosystem
Black bears are part of nature and are beautiful
Populations should be restored to the carrying capacity of the habitat
Do not want them to become extinct
Human-Bear Conflict
Manage bear populations to minimize hazards to humans
Expand their range but not in areas of high populations
The population should be allowed to grow until it becomes a problem such as too many negative incidents in a small geographic range
Hunting
Provide hunting opportunities
Manage bear numbers through hunting
Grow until the population can support hunting

Why do you think the black bear population should not be allowed to grow?

Very few comments

Themes include:

Human-Bear Conflict
Bears can be a threat to humans, motoring public and livestock
Concern for bears showing up in residential/populated areas
Fear of hiking in the woods with bears

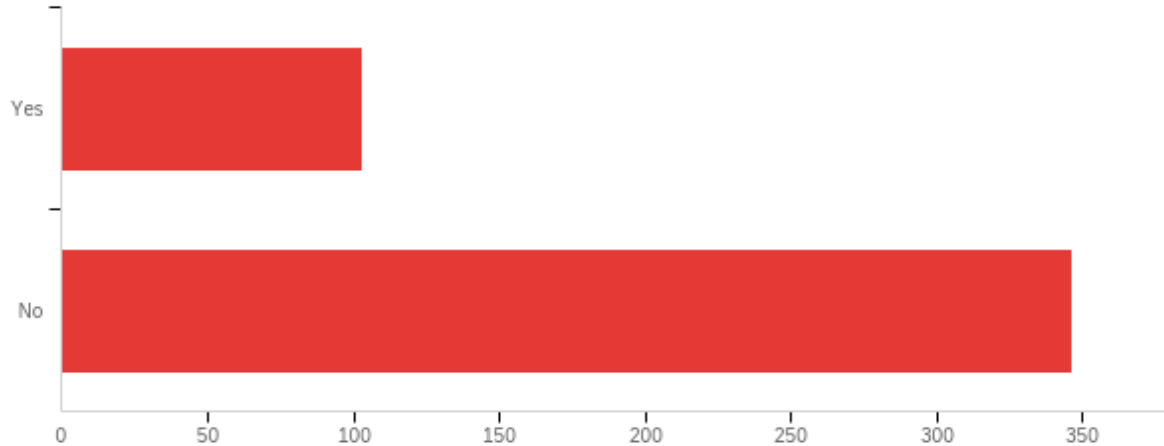
Do you have concerns with the range of black bears expanding geographically to other parts of Missouri?

All Respondents:

23% of all respondents have concerns with black bears expanding to other parts of Missouri

77% of all respondents do not have concerns with black bears expanding to other parts of Missouri

Do you have concerns with the range of black bears expanding to other parts of Missouri?

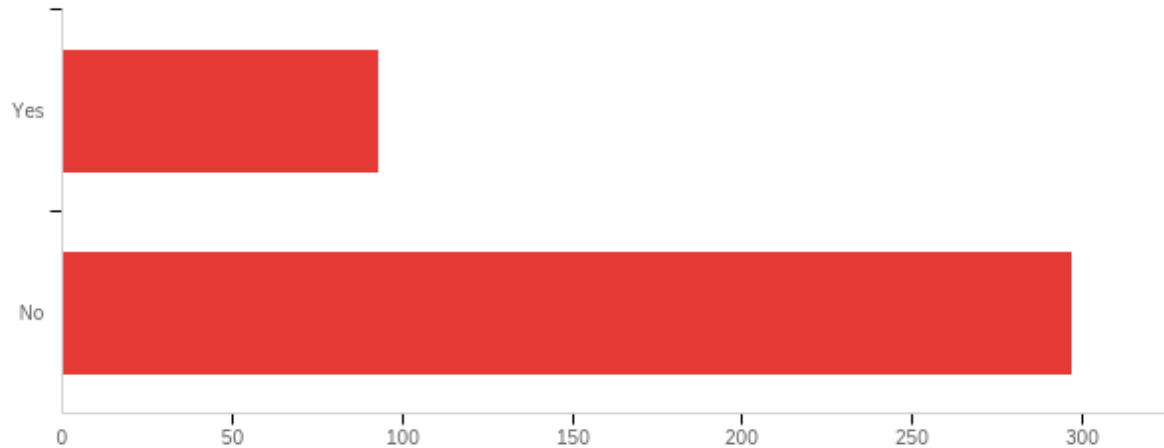


Open Houses:

24% of all respondents have concerns with black bears expanding to other parts of Missouri

76% of all respondents do not have concerns with black bears expanding to other parts of Missouri

Do you have concerns with the range of black bears expanding to other parts of Missouri?

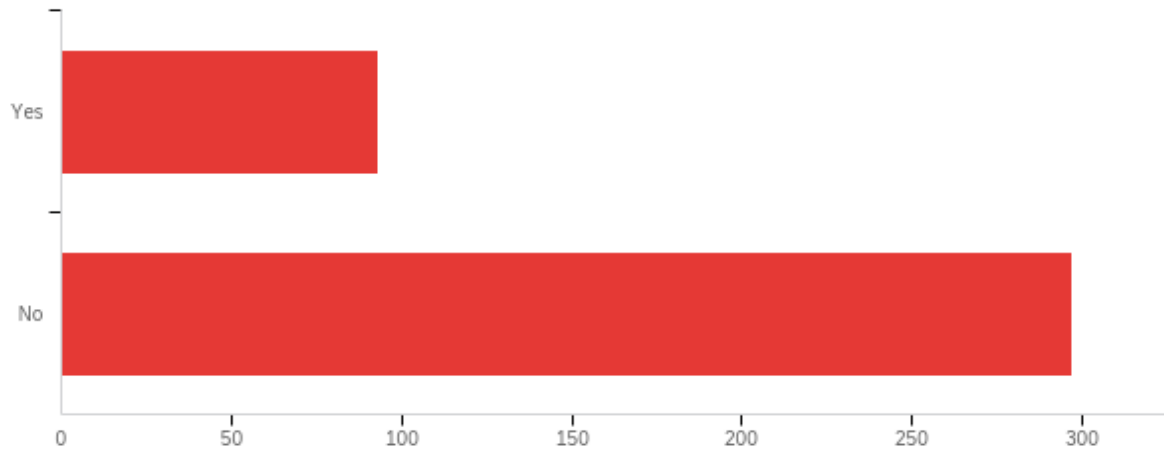


Online:

17% of all respondents have concerns with black bears expanding to other parts of Missouri

83% of all respondents do not have concerns with black bears expanding to other parts of Missouri

Do you have concerns with the range of black bears expanding to other parts of Missouri?



Why do you have concerns about the range expanding?

Themes include:

Human-bear conflict
Concern for bears entering populated/urban/residential areas
Fear of encounters
Another nuisance wildlife animal

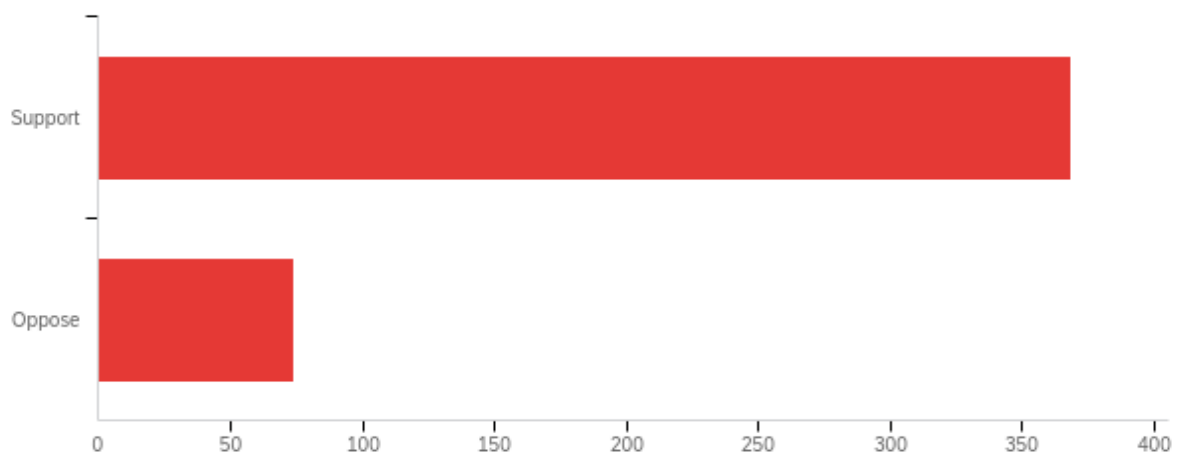
Do you support or oppose having a highly regulated, limited hunting season?

All Respondents:

83% of all respondents support a highly regulated, limited hunting season

17% of all respondents oppose a highly regulated, limited hunting season

Do you support or oppose having a highly regulated, limited hunting season?

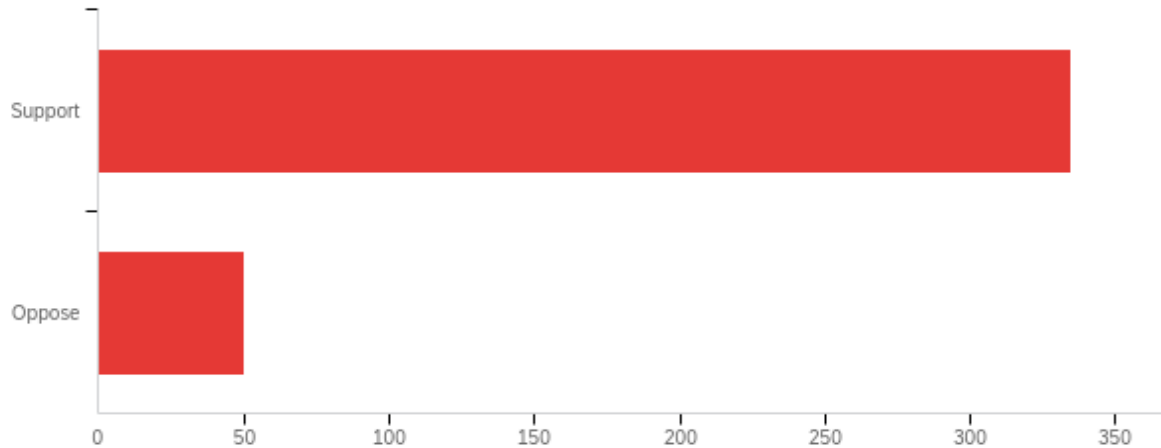


Open Houses:

87% of all respondents support a highly regulated, limited hunting season

13% of all respondents oppose a highly regulated, limited hunting season

Do you support or oppose having a highly regulated, limited hunting season?

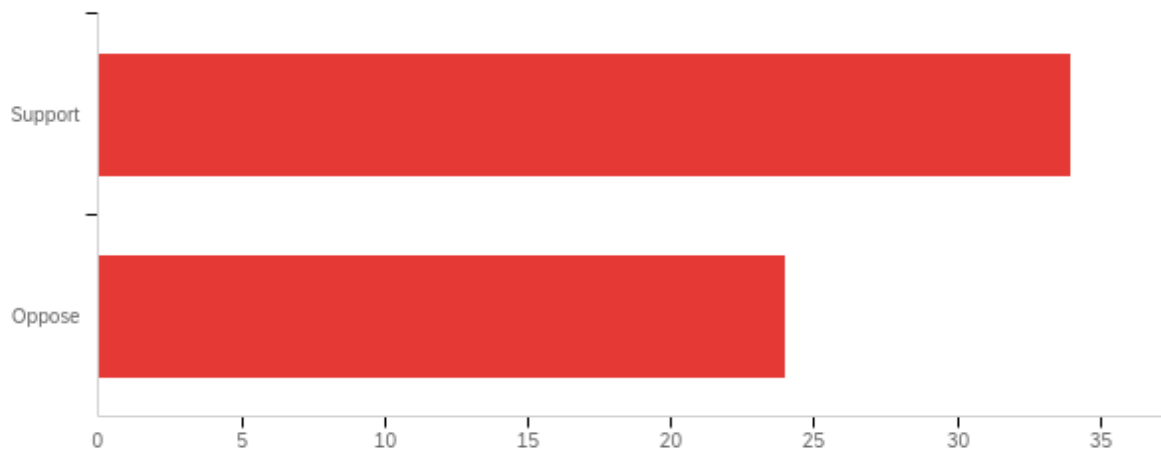


Online:

59% of all respondents support a highly regulated, limited hunting season

41% of all respondents oppose a highly regulated, limited hunting season

Do you support or oppose having a highly regulated, limited hunting season?



Why do you support a highly regulated hunting season?

Strong support for a highly regulated hunting season

Themes include:

Best way to manage a bear population
Management is the key to sustainability of the population
Use science-based research to manage bears
Manage human-bear conflicts
Creates opportunities to get outdoors and create memories

Provides an opportunity to harvest game animals to eat
Opportunity to expand hunting experiences
Folks are looking forward to harvesting a black bear for the first time in their life

Why do you not support a highly regulated hunting season?

Strong concern for a highly regulated hunting season

Themes include:

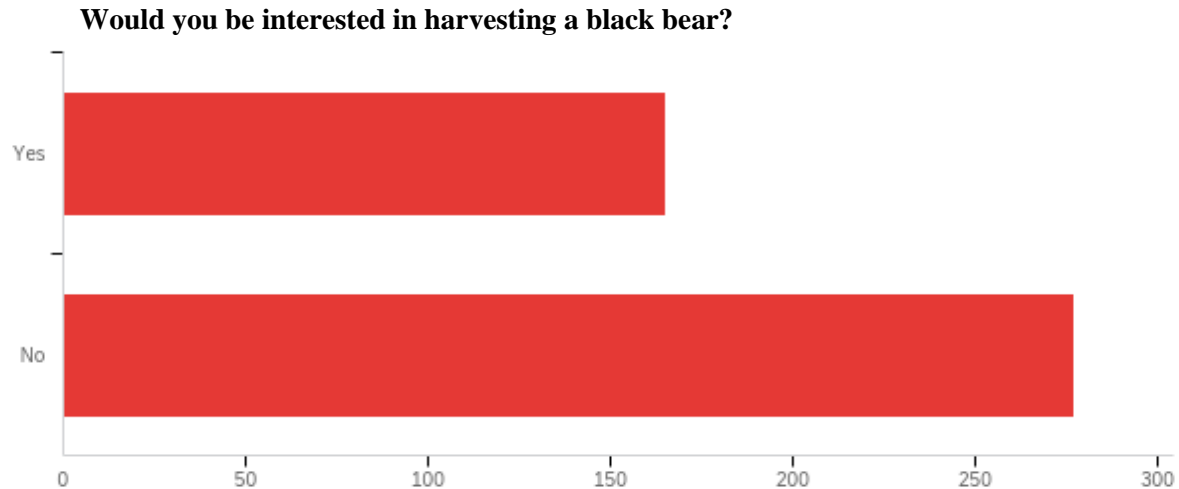
Do not support hunting
Hunting is inhumane and painful
Do not support killing/hunting of animals that are not used as food
Strongly oppose hunting
Numbers are not accurate
Data is not convincing
Just want to bring in trophy hunters from other states
Need more bears before having a hunting season
Deal with human-bear conflicts before having a hunting season
No dangerous encounters have occurred
Hunting seasons are needed when bears become a nuisance and/or over populated
Oppose managing bear population by hunting
Why reintroduce bears then kill them?
Use contraception, killing is not management
Car accidents and nuisance bears will keep the population stable
Do not support trophy hunting
Do not allow trophy hunting, people will shoot the biggest bears and not the problem bears
Trophy hunting is unnecessary for population control
Trophy hunters from other states will come to hunt bears, not to actually keep the population to a "safe" amount
Miscellaneous Comments
Would support if it was not highly regulated
Different species balance each other's populations
Because these are God's animals and we should love them as part of the creation
Studies show hunting has an adverse effect on the overall population
Bears can be a threat to humans, motoring public and livestock
Quit killing wildlife for money
Relocation
Stop killing as a solution it is deplorable
Bears are not dangerous, they are just looking for food
There is no need for hunting

Would you be interested in harvesting a black bear?

All Respondents:

37% of all respondents would be interested in harvesting a black bear

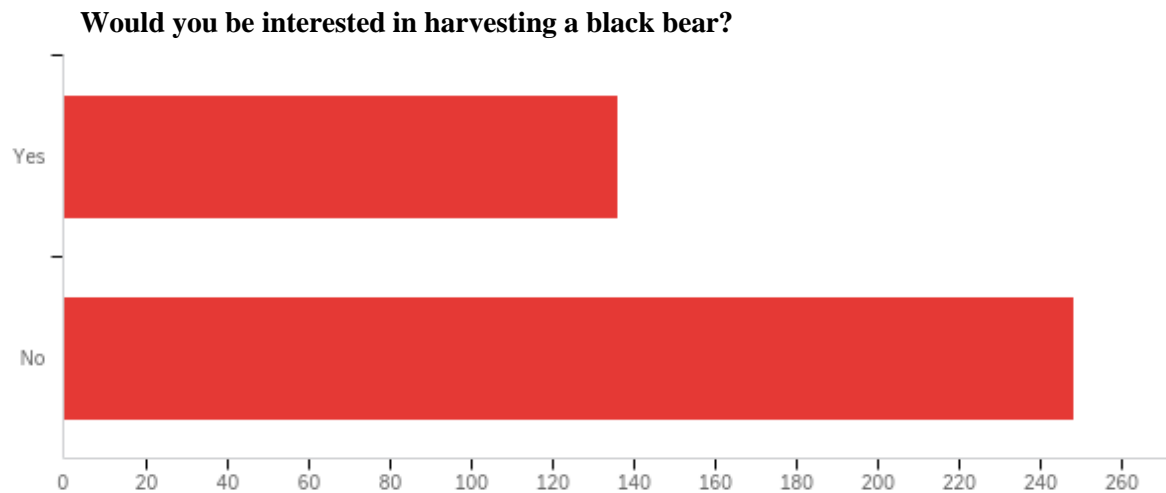
63% of all respondents are not interested in harvesting a black bear



Open Houses:

35% of all respondents would be interested in harvesting a black bear

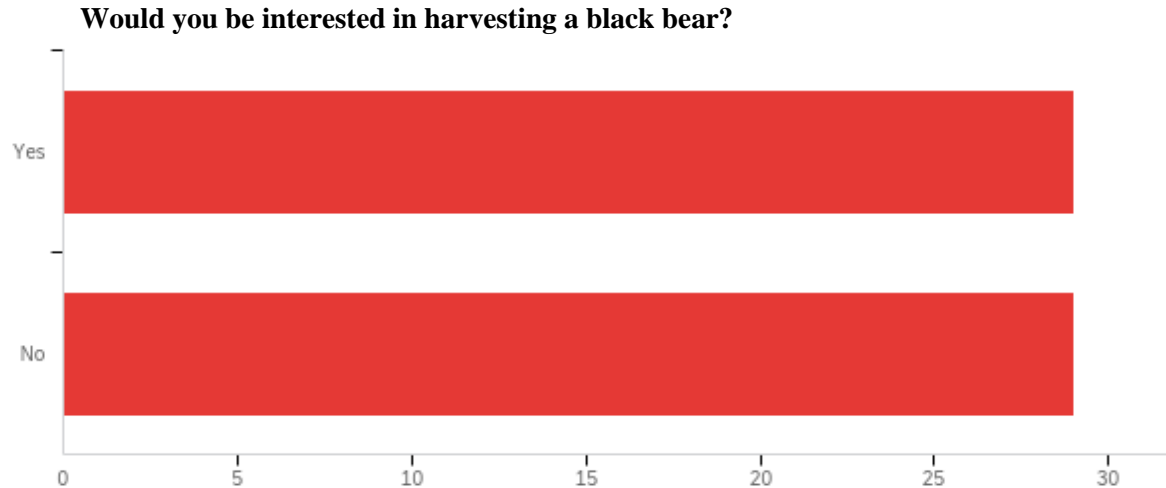
65% of all respondents are not interested in harvesting a black bear



Online:

50% of all respondents would be interested in harvesting a black bear

50% of all respondents are not interested in harvesting a black bear



Additional comments regarding black bear research and management

Lots of ideas

Themes include:

Science based research
Use science-based research to determine the practical use of hunting bears in Missouri
Increase the amount of bear habitat
Agricultural Industry
Ag industry needs to be involved in the management of black bears
Bear damage should be fully compensated to the agricultural producer
The citizen who owns the property and pay taxes for many public programs, not the bears

Support hunting

Support a point-based season
Black bears are delicious and super cool! Bring the numbers up!
Support more bears and a hunting season, but not over bait

No hunting

No trophy hunting/out of state hunters
Hunting is a terrible idea, let black bears recover and expand
Bears should be trapped or relocated

Support for MDC

Support MDC resource managers
Thanks for all you do
Keep up the good work

Bear Aware

The public needs to be educated about bears
Explain bear management including terms such as harvesting
Social tolerance will increase with increased education

Concerns

More about recreation than conservation
Hitting bears with automobiles
Concerned with people running around the woods with big guns

Wildlife Viewing

Interest in safely viewing and photographing bears in the wild
Love seeing bears
Enjoy seeing wildlife

Miscellaneous comments

Continue educating the public on how to behave in bear country
Priority should be given to keystone species like turkeys
Does not know the definition of “harvesting a black bear”
Who supports you? How much money do you get to let them hunt the bear?
Massive fines for poachers
Leave them alone

Managing Human-Bear Conflict

Human-bear conflict is increasing with the growing bear population.
Attraction to food is the most frequent source of human-bear conflict.
Removing or securing food attractants is key to preventing the majority of human-bear conflicts.
Bring in birdfeeders
Keep trash secure trash. Store in a secure outbuilding, secure container, or behind electric fencing. Put trash out the morning of pick-up.
Do not leave pet food or livestock feed out unattended. Store pet food or livestock feed in secure outbuildings, secure containers, or behind electric fencing.
Protect bee hives with electric fencing. Be sure fencing is maintained.
Bears are long-lived and have an exceptional memory. They will often revisit locations where they received food.
MDC has tools available to aversively condition persistent bears. Aversive conditioning discourages a bear from returning but may be temporary. Removing the attractant is required to ensure bears do not have continued access to food.

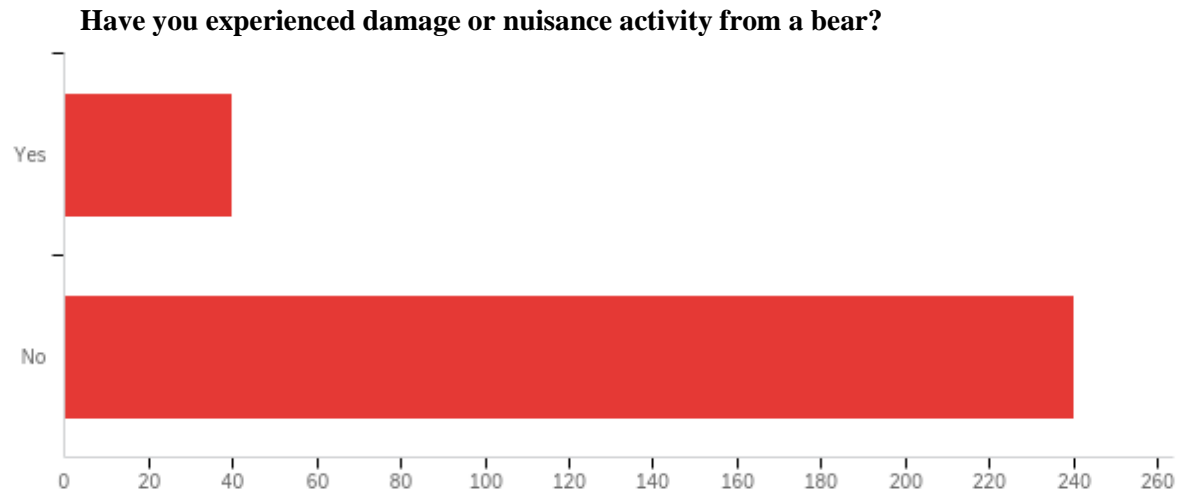
If you experience damage or nuisance activity from a bear, contact your MDC Regional Office or your local Conservation Agent

Have you ever experienced damage or nuisance activity from a bear?

All Respondents:

14% of all respondents had experience damage or nuisance activity from a bear

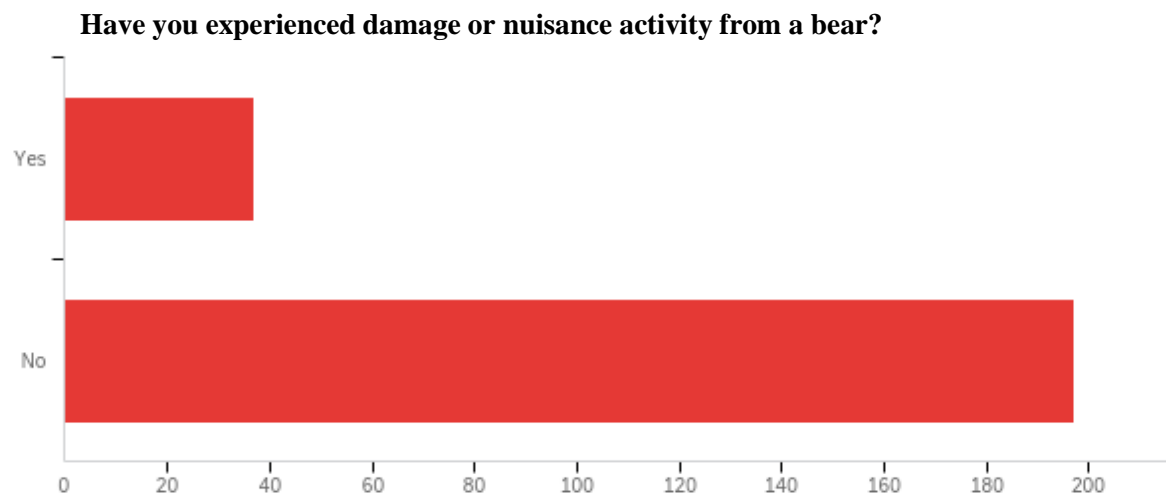
86% of all respondents had not experienced damage or nuisance activity from a bear



Open House:

16% of all respondents had experience damage or nuisance activity from a bear

84% of all respondents had not experienced damage or nuisance activity from a bear

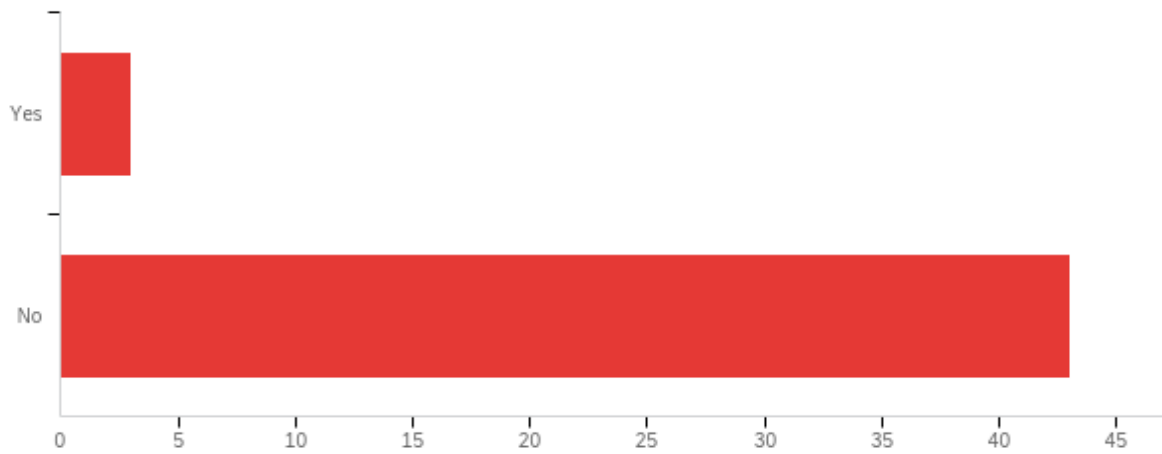


Online:

7% of all respondents had experience damage or nuisance activity from a bear

93% of all respondents had not experienced damage or nuisance activity from a bear

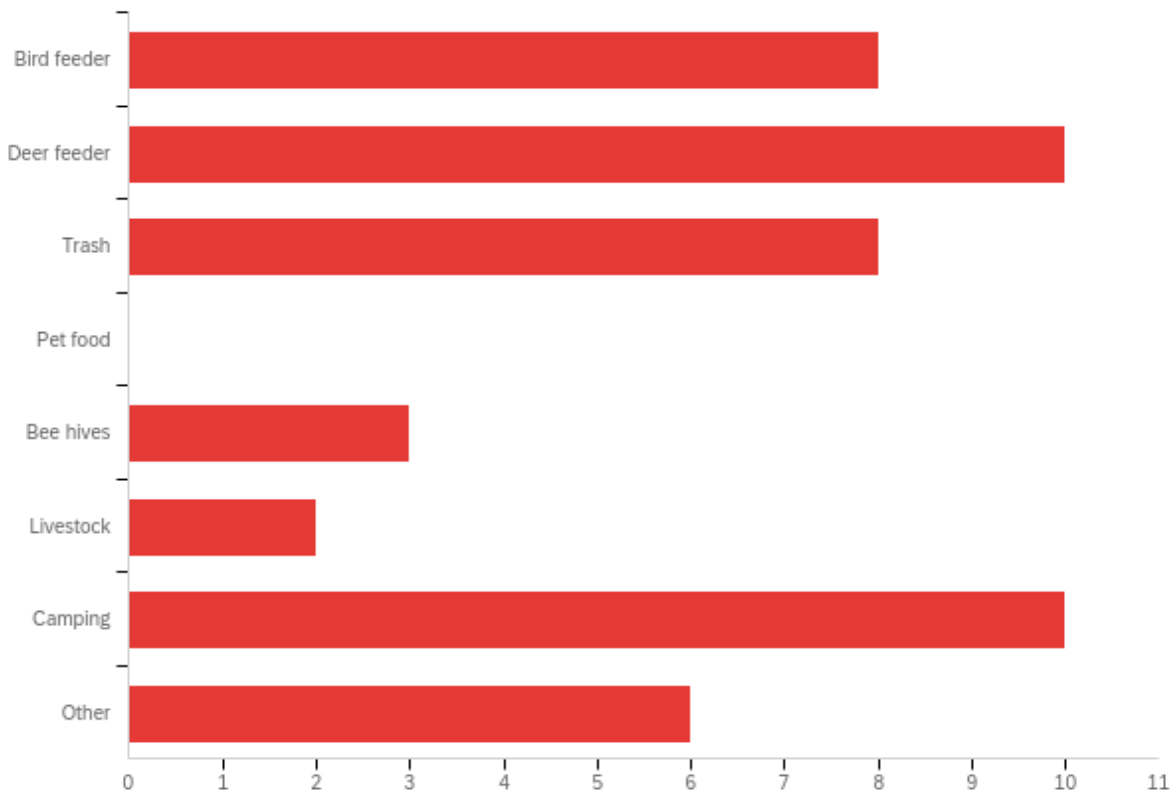
Have you experienced damage or nuisance activity from a bear?



What type of damage or nuisance activity did you experience?

All respondents:

What type of damage or nuisance activity did you experience?



47 of the respondents experienced some type of damage or nuisance activity including:

Deer feeder (10)
Camping (10)
Bird feeder (8)
Trash (8)
Bee hives (3)
Livestock (2)
Other (6)
BBQ sauce on picnic grates
Blackberry patch
Fence-privacy wood board ripped off
Ice House
Fruit trees

Please provide details on the damage or nuisance activity

They ate the brood
One got in my car because I left food in there though I knew they were around
My electric fence stopped working. The bear came, and I realized my fence was broken. Fixed fence, bear gone
I lived outside Winter Park, Colorado. Bears were common, and people were stupid
General wreckage of the bird feeder, as in total destruction, far beyond the capability of raccoons
Destroyed camp site, scared the kids, me and the wife
Not related to Missouri. When backpacking in New Mexico a bear knocked down my tent while sleeping (attempting to sleep)
Had one break a PVC feeder in half and it had claw marks running the length (6 ft)
Destroyed 1/8 plate steel and fold like paper to get in trash
Several years ago, a forest campground off Highway 21 the camp host forgot to tell us about bears. They ate my bananas on the table
Washington County, MO bird feeder chewed in half and iron stand bent
Tore up cooler left outside
In the Smokey Mountains picnic area
When I was young, I lived in State College, Pennsylvania. Occasionally bears would wander into town to go through trash cans. When that happened, citizens were warned and removed all possible trash from their yards
It was a plastic deer feeder. We built steel feeders, no problem now
Bees in another state. Ohio and PA
Took over feeder and chased deer away

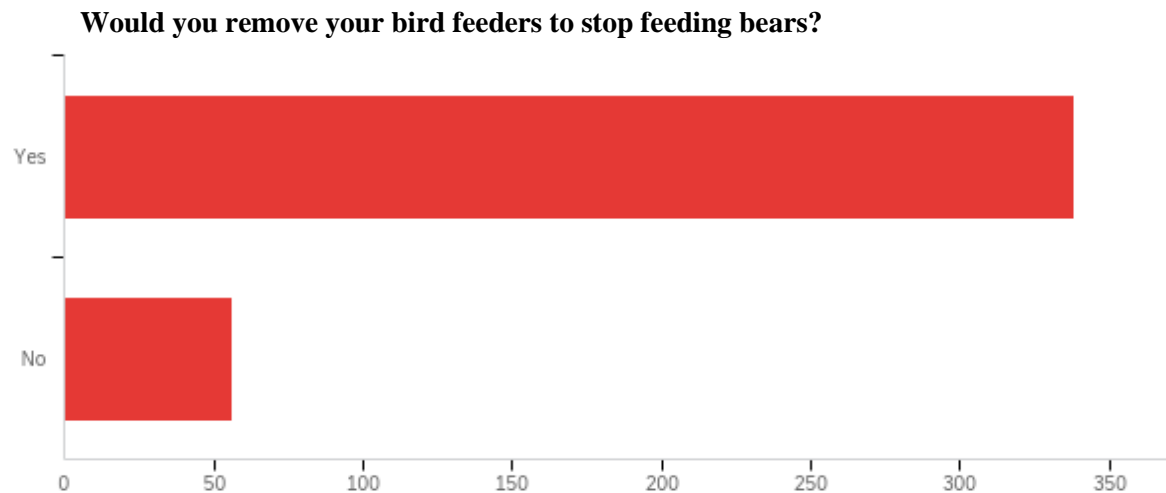
In Pennsylvania
Bear #1014 between Hwy 76 and AM Hwy, tore down deer feeder on private property. Capture on game cam
2017 at campsite, tried to get through a privacy fence
Bears in campgrounds in Canada and Wyoming
They dumped our trash and dragged it all over
Empty stored food in summer
Farm in Douglas County, frequently on trail camera
Maybe our bird seed container. We assumed it was a raccoon but now we are not sure

If you had a bear visiting your bird feeders, would you remove your feeders to stop feeding the bear?

All Respondents:

86% of all respondents indicating they would remove a bird feeder to stop feeding a bear

14% of all respondents indicated they would not remove a bird feeder to stop feeding a bear

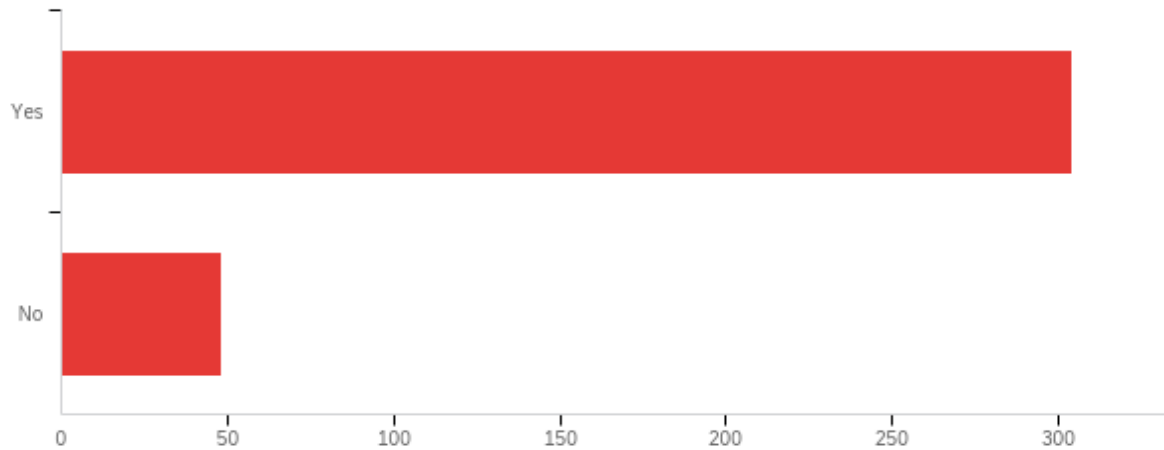


Open House:

86% of all respondents indicating they would remove a bird feeder to stop feeding a bear

14% of all respondents indicated they would not remove a bird feeder to stop feeding a bear

Would you remove your bird feeders to stop feeding bears?

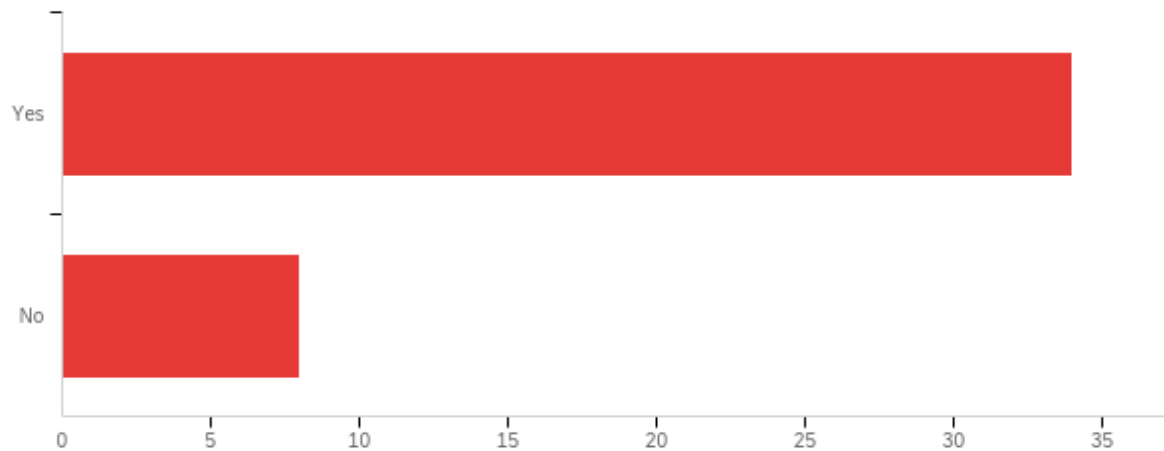


Online:

81% of all respondents indicating they would remove a bird feeder to stop feeding a bear

19% of all respondents indicated they would not remove a bird feeder to stop feeding a bear

Would you remove your bird feeders to stop feeding bears?



Why wouldn't you remove your bird feeder?

Not a strong reason to
Because bears need food too. Just like the squirrels raid my birdfeeders already. No different.
I like the bird
We would explore ways of maintaining our feeders with the bears
I would not because if he isn't threatening me it is not a problem
Would make it more difficult for bears to reach
I like the birds
Would move them higher or place on a pole they couldn't climb

It's for the birds, not the bear
I like bears, people not so much
Birds are nowhere the nuisance or threat that bears, coyotes and deer are
Because bears are not the problem - people are! I would bring feeders in at night - monitor feeders during the day
Birds are important also
I would move them, so we could coexist
Enjoy watching hummingbirds at the feeders
Now you want me to change my lifestyle
I would stay inside and enjoy the site and take photos
I would want to kill the bear, not alter my lifestyle
I want to attract them
Birds need food in the winter. I would take measures, so bears can't get to the feeders
All animals need to eat
I'd look for ways to keep the bears out
I would make my feeders bear proof
I would put the feeder out for the sustainability of other wildlife and I don't agree that should be stopped due to bear signs
Wouldn't bother me unless the bear was a problem
I might change them to a better design, but I love to watch the birds
Want to see one and that would be "close up"!
I would place the feeder in a location that the bear couldn't get into in an effort to discourage the bear
I like birds
Love watching them
But I would remove them in the late afternoon and put them out in the morning
I want to watch them

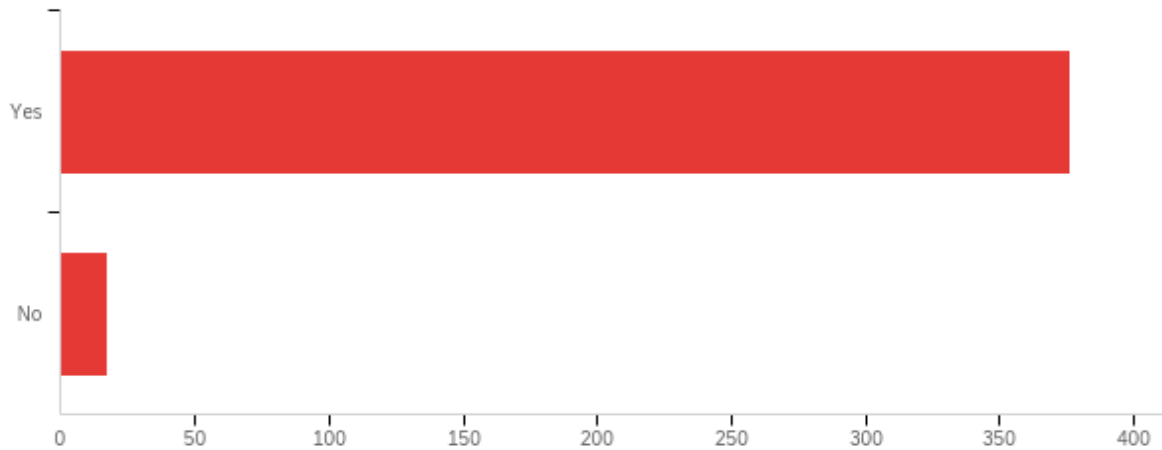
If you had a bear accessing your trash, would you attempt to modify your trash management?

All Respondents:

96% of all respondents indicated they would attempt to modify their trash management

4% of all respondents indicated they would not attempt to modify their trash management

Would you attempt to modify your trash management?

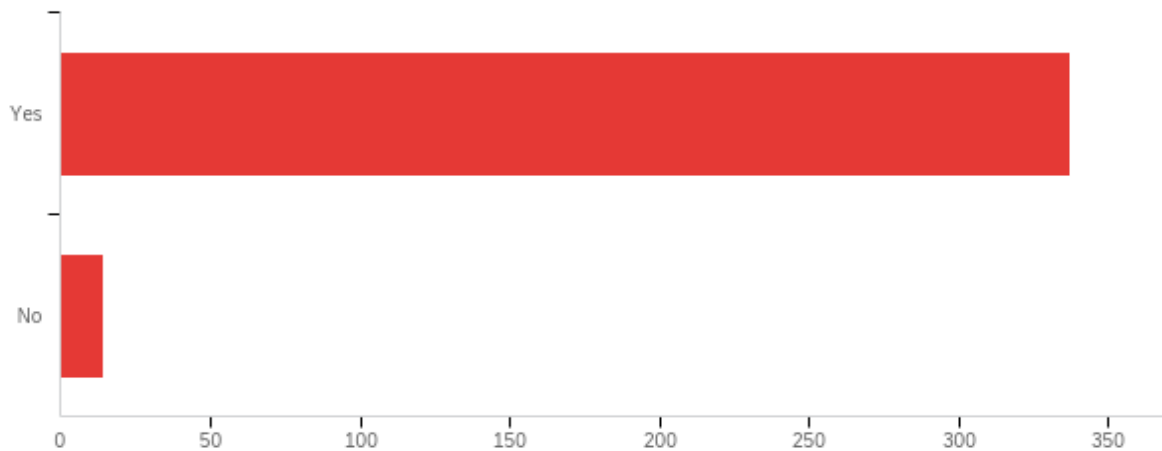


Open House Respondents:

96% of all respondents indicated they would attempt to modify their trash management

4% of all respondents indicated they would not attempt to modify their trash management

Would you attempt to modify your trash management?

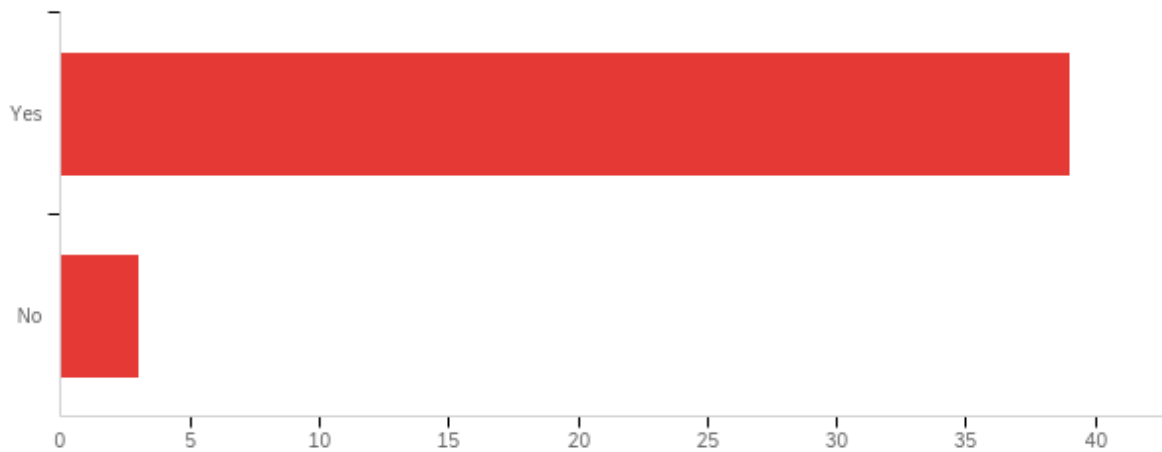


Online Respondents:

96% of all respondents indicated they would attempt to modify their trash management

4% of all respondents indicated they would not attempt to modify their trash management

Would you attempt to modify your trash management?



Why wouldn't you try to modify your trash management?

We have a contracted service in Webster Groves. We would hope a new strengthened container would be made available
I already do most of what you suggest. Bears are a threat
Now you want me to change my lifestyle
Can place trash out the morning of pick up but I am required to use trash hauler waste container which is not a secure container
This would be inconvenient for farmers
I would look through the laws/rules to see if I can legally and humanly kill it because if it's in my neighborhood the population is already too high in the woods and that's pushing the bears to rural communities. And killing the bear could save lives
Time to hunt
It's not up to me. It's up to the Trash Management company

Additional comments regarding human-bear conflict

Humans need to be more responsible to the environment that we have messed up
There is no need to kill the bears. This is just an excuse to kowtow to hunters.
Educate the public.... let humans make changes... Don't KILL bears because we have taken their environment from them.
I oppose allowing bear hunting in Missouri. Missouri Dept. of Conservation's data and arguments are not persuasive. As such, the bear hunting regulation seems to be an effort to attract out of state trophy hunters rather than conserve Missouri's environment.
I have a small farm with rabbits. I had a black bear eating the leftover food in the rabbit feeders. I started feeding them in the morning and removing the feeders at night. I never lost a chicken or rabbit to the bear. We have goats, dogs, cows, and cats outside also. The rabbit hutch was a little more secluded and away from the dogs. We saw the bear many times and never had a "conflict". We secure our trash and follow

these other recommend practices like leaving doors shut. The bear has nothing in our yard to be interested in now and we rarely see it anymore except occasionally at the pond across the street not long after dark. Most "conflicts" are blown out of proportion like how someone will see a 2ft garter snake and swear under oath it was a 9ft boa. If homeowners take the right steps, they can live with them and never have issues. Of course, they should always stay alert and never lose respect for the potential of danger either. From my own experiences over the years with wildlife I just think most "dangerous conflicts" were human over exaggerated fear. We forget they are not coming into our yard, we built a home in theirs.
No
Be sensible about situation. Most humans are inadequate about wildlife
Remove the humans leave the bears alone. Humans are always the problem not the animal
Humans are the ones who can mitigate it.
I would hope MDC will give rural landowners the option to hunt nuisance bears on their property. My kids play outside a lot and I do not want them to encounter a bear
In high bear population areas could bear secure trash containers be available to the public?
Educating the public on living in bear country is key.
Enjoy floating Meramec /Current Rivers/ want to be aware of recommended precautions for camping & floating.
I would take measures to protect bears
Need guidance on apiary management and bears. I have bee hives near Seaton, MO.
Make humans do their jobs to prevent human-bear issues
I am not sure my city is so uptight about stuff then the extra cost I would have to endure is something I have to think about you have to pay for everything then let's not forget the tax
At our weekend place there is a dumpster by the river. We have seen bears there because people do not pick up the trash that raccoons pull out of dumpsters or close the lids on the dumpsters.
People need to be managed - not wildlife. Agree with securing trash but will continue to feed other wildlife - i.e. birds.
I have seen them camping but was not a nuisance.
Reluctant to remove bird feeders (unless it is only temporary)
No problem. I think we just got one male in the area around St. Clair MO at Little Indians Park
Such actions would be symptomatic of a bigger problem.
What phone number would you call late at night or early morning for help with a bear. I have not seen any number posted.
I have lived in and visited many places that have well and poorly managed bear programs I firmly believe that bear managements can be successful.
Or get a secure bear proof refuse container.
Live in condo with large dumpsters
As long as it was feasible economically.
Where do we get the money to do all these things!!!
I'd like not to but think it would be hard to keep the bears out of bird feeders.

Many years of visiting our National Parks-Glacier and Yellowstone primarily also Denali. I know the problems facing human/bear encounters. A fed bear is a dead bear.
No bears yet.
Not an issue for us.
Provide ways to get rid of nuisance bears through the department
I'm not sure about in Missouri but out west, many human-predator conflicts result in death to the animal. I'd like to see a tracking collar placed on the individuals that are involved in conflicts (when trapping said animal is possible) to give the offender a second chance before its killed. For instance, a bear that killed livestock would be trapped, fitted with a radio collar, and relocated. Obviously, this would only work if you could guarantee you caught the right bear.
If bear kill or harm domestic animals or farm stock and especially bee hives the over seer and or farmers have right to illuminate immediately especially bee and farm animals
Carried bird feeders off
Move bird feeders away from house to keep bears away from the house
Have seen one in my yard, travelling through.
Have bee hives. Have had other people in bee club be raided & destroyed hives, but not me.
Have been working with Conservation Department past 3 years on trapping bears on my property and enjoy doing it
If a bear was visiting a bird feeder I would move the feeder or put up electric fence around feeder.
Generally, bird feeders aren't necessary for the bird's survival.
Hunting does not reduce conflicts. Studying whether hunting bears would result in fewer human-bear conflicts, many peer-reviewed, published researchers found no evidence of a connected relationship between hunting a bear population and human safety. Availability of human food is often the root cause of most negative human-bear interactions, but trophy hunters generally remove non-problem bears from the population, and often attempt to target large, male bears to acquire an impressive trophy.
Please do not allow bear hunting in MO.
I want to know why a black bear was killed in jasper county by authorities instead of being relocated as it should have been!
I would like to know who had the black bear put to death in Joplin Mo. on July 12, 2019 and why someone did not check with animal rights org. before quickly having put down, the explanation for their putting the bear to death was weak at best.
All of your suggestions require either additional time and effort or expense. What about those who have neither?
I was at a MDC presentation for kids (not specifically) and when asked about bears - basically no constructive advice was given regarding "encounters." I hope there are more serious educational efforts with inexperienced young hunters and kids living in bear habitat.
Encourage animals to move on if there are conflicts
We already do this with coons (along with using DP traps)
It's the right thing to do!
To keep the bear safe (regarding bird feeders and trash responses)

We have it doesn't help all the time
I would love to get involved if at all possible.
I think it's fantastic. (Comment is in regard to expansion of black bears to other parts of Missouri)
Don't feed the bears
The food would only encourage another visit
Bears are known to be a threat to human civilization, are known to attack human children and human adults, and Bears pose a significant risk to the motoring public. Stock keepers or ranchers do loose livestock to predation by bears. Bears might eat ranchers out of house and home... And, Bears "might attack or kill us" because they are hungry, to defend territory that is no longer ours... but now belongs to the Bears...or simply because they can. Our present habitat will no longer support both bears and humans. Which do we prefer to have, Bears or Humans?

Be Bear Aware

- Don't feed bears-intentionally or accidentally
- Bird feeders, garbage, pet food, fires/smokers, etc. can attract bears to homes-remove or secure these food attractants
- If you see a bear, enjoy the encounter from a distance, give the bear an escape route and never run
- When camping or hiking in bear country, be bear aware. Store food in secure containers, keep a clean camp and keep cooking and sleeping areas separate
- Report bear sightings to the Department of Conservation
- If you experience damage or nuisance activity from a bear, contact your MDC Regional Office or your local Conservation Agent

Which best describes your overall impression of communications from the Missouri Department of Conservation?

All Respondents:

44% of all respondents indicated they are kept fully informed

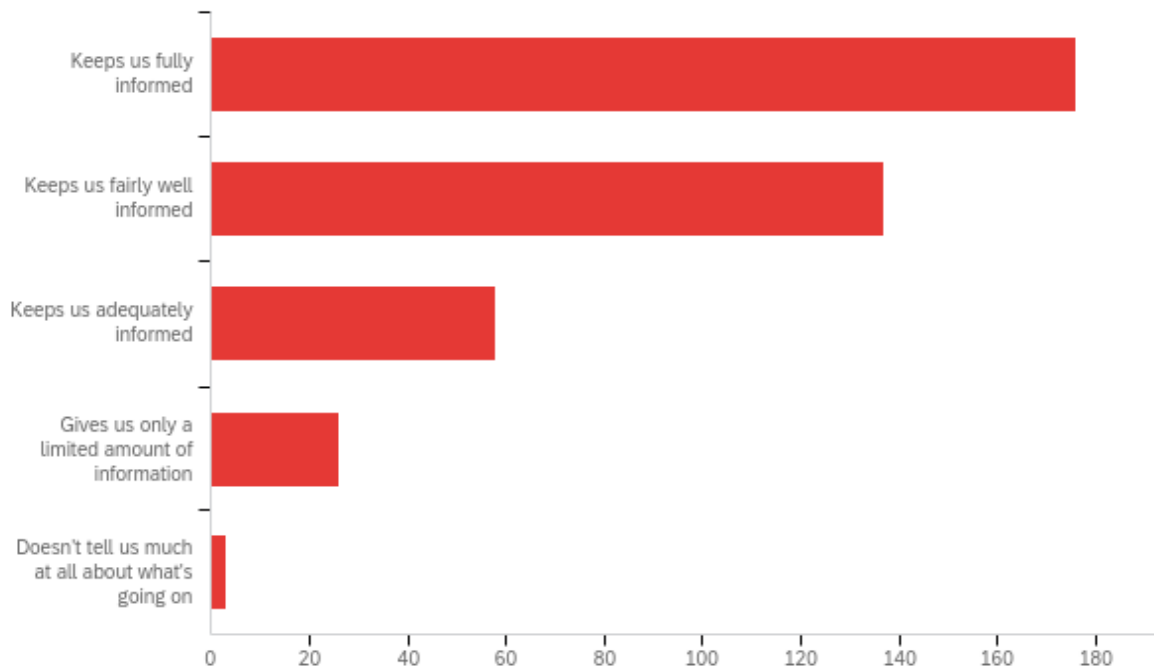
34% of all respondents indicated they are fairly well informed

15% of all respondents indicated they were adequately informed

6% of all respondents indicated they were only given a limited amount of information

1% of all respondents indicated they are not told much about what is going on

Which best describes your overall impression of communications from the Missouri Department of Conservation



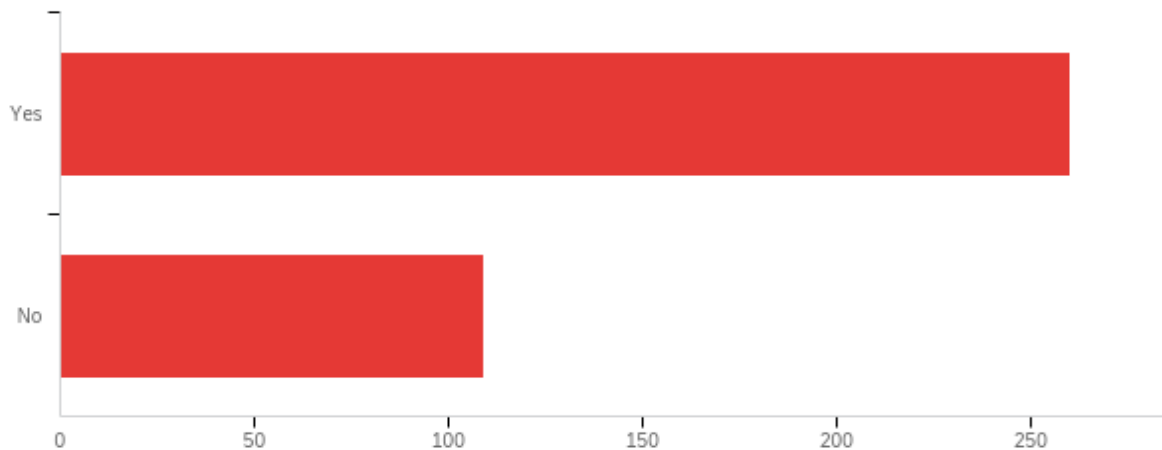
Are you familiar with MDC's "Be Bear Aware" messaging, which shares information on what to do if you encounter a bear in Missouri?

All Respondents:

70% of all respondents indicated they are familiar with the "Be Bear Aware" message

30% of all respondents indicated they are **not** familiar with the "Be Bear Aware" message

Are you familiar with the "Be Bear Aware" message?



Compared with a year ago, how would you rate your knowledge of black bears in Missouri?

All Respondents:

30% of all respondents indicated they are much more knowledgeable

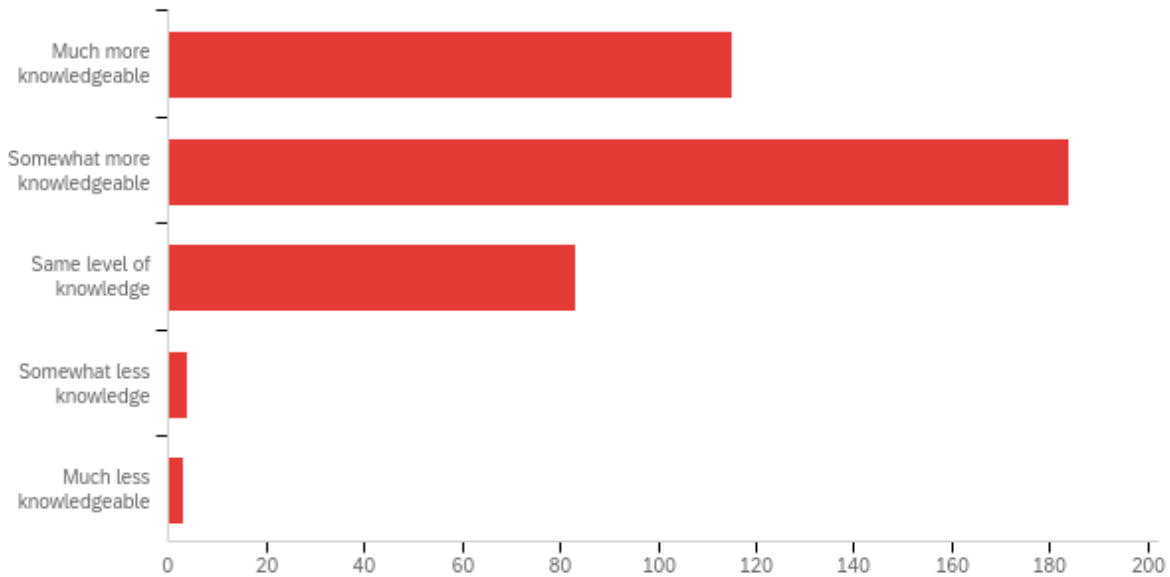
47% of all respondents indicated they are somewhat more knowledgeable

21% of all respondents indicated they were at the same level of knowledge

1% of all respondents indicated they were somewhat less knowledgeable.

1% of all respondents indicated they were much less knowledgeable

Compared with a year ago, how would you rate your knowledge of black bears in Missouri?



From which of the following sources do you now receive most of your information from MDC?

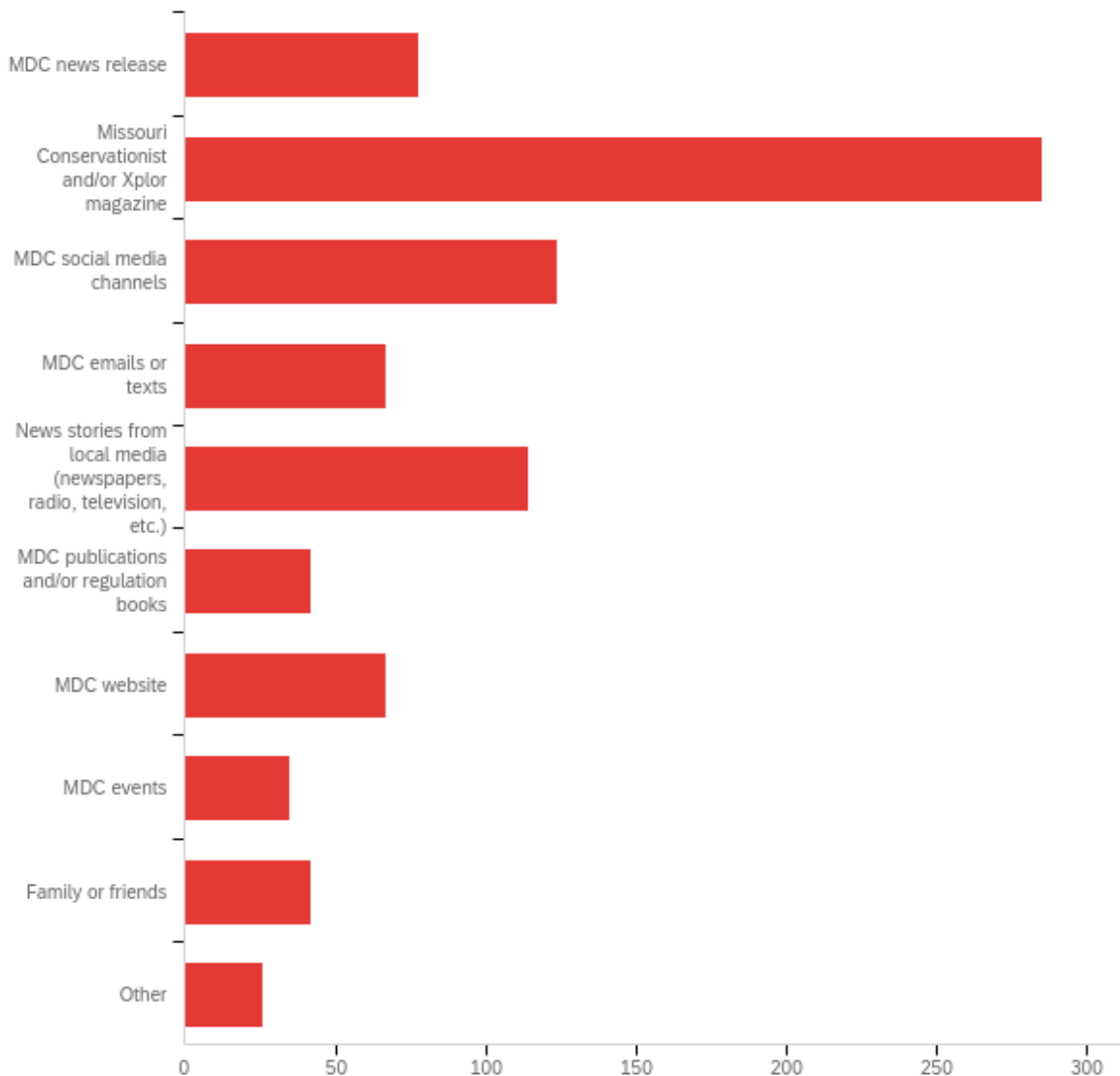
(Select your top three communication channels)

All Respondents:

- 32% of all respondents indicated the *Missouri Conservationist* and/or *Xplor* magazine
- 14% of all respondents indicated MDC social media channels
- 13% of all respondents indicated News stories from local media (newspapers, radio, television, etc.)
- 9% of all respondents indicated MDC new release
- 8% of all respondents indicated MDC website
- 8% of all respondents indicated MDC emails or texts
- 5% of all respondents indicated Family or friends
- 5% of all respondents indicated MDC publications and/or regulation books
- 4% of all respondents indicated MDC events
- 3% of all respondents indicated other

Groups
Signs at national and local parks
MDC naturalists
Weekly report online
Facebook/Internet not MDC
I am a volunteer
River Hills Traveler
Conservation Federation of Missouri
I am a volunteer naturalist with Powder Valley and I am kept very informed about Missouri bears
Volunteer at Powder Valley
Missouri Department of Agriculture
Conservation Federation of Missouri
Friends of MDC
State sources
Pioneer newsletter
Discussion with MDC personnel
Private Land Manager
Internet
Signage in recreation areas
Volunteer meetings
Alaskan natives, Wyoming natives, natives of South Carolina and several other states

**Which of the following sources do you know receive most of your information from MDC?
(Select your top three communication channels)**



How would you prefer to get future information from MDC on black bears?

All Respondents:

27% of all respondents indicated they would prefer to get future information from MDC programs or events

24% of all respondents indicated they would prefer to get future information from the MDC website

21% of all respondents indicated they would prefer to get future information from social media

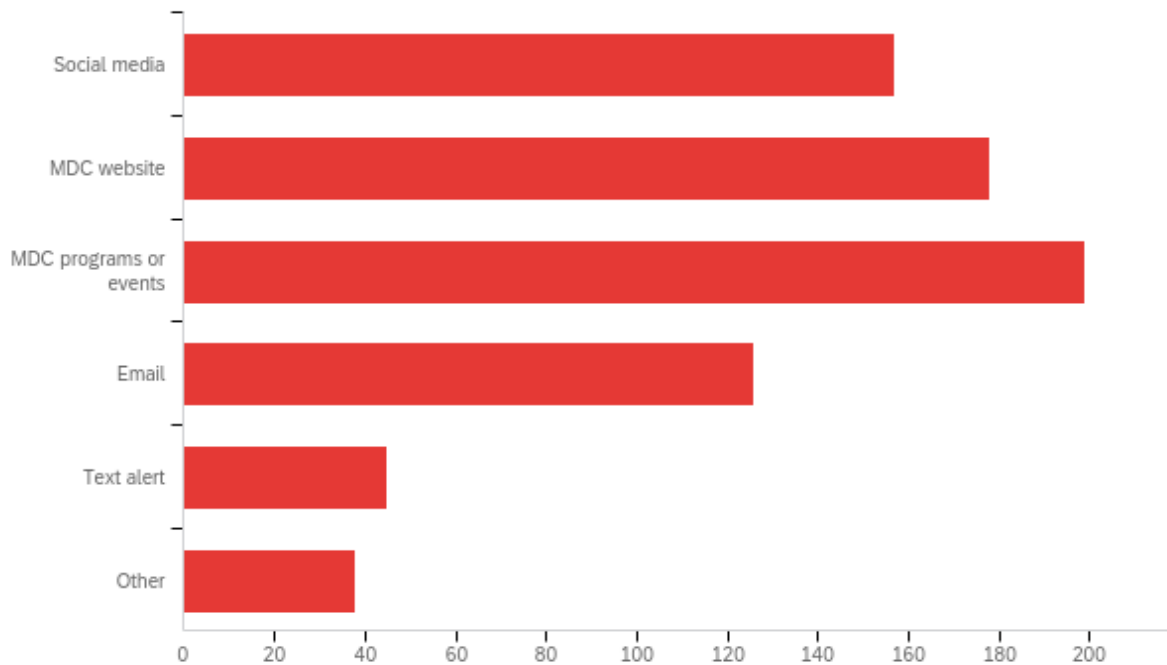
17% of all respondents indicated they would prefer to get future information from emails

6% of all respondents indicated they would prefer to get future information from text alerts

5% of all respondents indicated they would prefer to get future information from other

Groups
Signage in all locations where relevant
The Conservationist Magazine
MDC app like NHL app/hockey app is a very good model
Newspaper and Missouri Conservationist
MDC publications
Magazine
Don't own a computer or Iphone
Printed material
News
TV special reports
Personal interaction

How would you prefer to get future information from MDC on black bears?



Additional comments on Bear Aware

Just use common sense!!
Keep the bears and bears safe-why? Because once there are gone what next-think about it harvest bears limited number to keep them healthy and safe
If humans don't follow the rules they need to be fined big money getting into their pockets will stop it
Really interested in bear interaction while camping, hiking and backpacking. Educating Scouts BSA etc. for safe encounter
Keep up the good work!

Social media waste too much time wadding through self-serving, fake news! Don't use it!!
Social media can get blown out of control. Uneducated people freak out to easy.
All
Thank you for an excellent conservation department. One of the best in the U.S.
Thanks for providing this program. It answered the questions that I have regarding bear. I'm glad to see the questions regarding harvesting if the population gets too large. Thanks.
Please keep up the great job you do MDC!!!
Now I wasn't trying to be a jerk enjoyed the show but do feel this way about a lot of things in the state I live in
Thanks for your public information sharing. I believe humans speaking to humans is best way to effectively get information to public.
Thank you for this. Laura was fabulous presenter. Kudos for second presentation @ 7 pm. Well done
The data needs more thorough examination and no lethal management methods should be on the table without a coordinated, robust education plan has been in place for at least 5 years.
Thank you mdc for giving education and peace of mind towards the presence of the black bear populations as it grows in numbers. Understanding the behaviors of black bears makes me feel more confidence and safe during our outdoor adventures...
Understand Be Bear Aware message after the bear talk (Great presentation)
Not sure where to write this-As a retired educator I can't emphasize the importance of getting out the message to students-primary and on up though school assemblies and programs. Kids are great at getting the message and will teach their parents. You would hit a broad audience
Thanks for the open house people need to be educated.
Tonight's speaker was excellent and very knowledgeable.
I am almost sure I am on your e-mail list. Once you came and talked at the Kirkwood Garden Club.
How many bears are collared?
My current impression is that information is reaching those who are actively searching for it. I would recommend considering outreach channels into additional adjacent spaces.
Public information through the internet.
Thank you for this program and educating the public. Bears and all predators are not monsters, nuisances but very important to a healthy ecosystem.
I believe MO has a wonderful conservation program. always great info in magazine and great online information.
Thank you for doing this program
I usually read the "Conservationist" cover to cover.
I didn't know about MDC's Bear Aware messaging until today.
Talked fast...hard to understand. Sound was kind of muffled or something...echo...sort of hard to understand. Nice presentation, she was familiar with materials and not glued to powerpoint. Nice booths with info-good length of presentation. Enjoyed getting more info individually.
MDC denied it in 2010 when we started seeing bears.

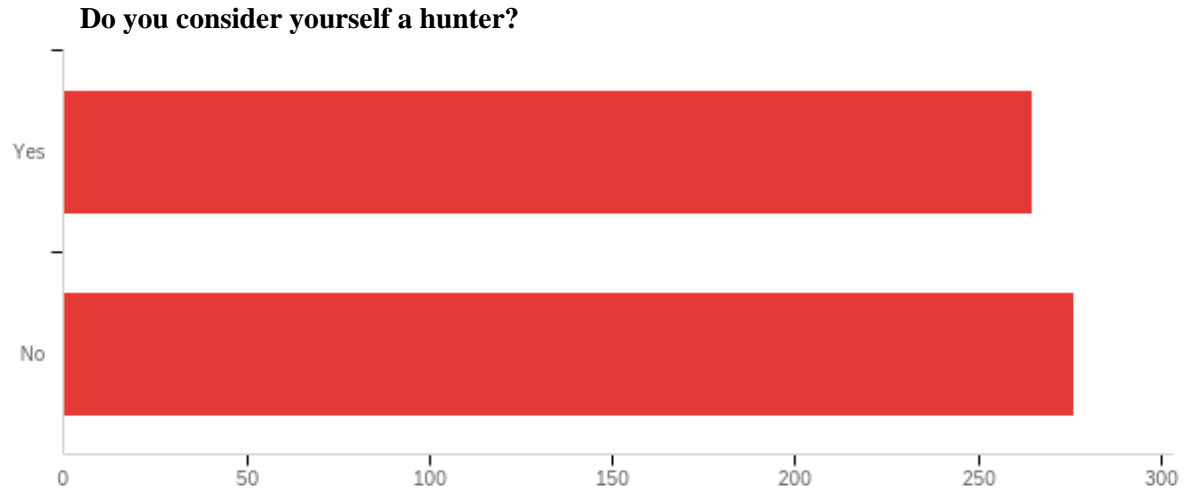
I really appreciate what the MDC provides, and I've always considered the agency a place that educates the public and helps wildlife. I would like to receive more information and get more involved in a positive way. Please - stop the bear hunting season so that I can continue to respect the MDC.
I would like to start receiving MO Conservationist Magazine again.
I don't see where additional information is needed except maybe by MoCon. I can't see that my input is welcome if I can't say "Attaboy" This is the first time I've ever been asked would I like to see a bear.
Excellent Presentation
I heard it tonight for the first time (regarding "Be Bear Aware" messaging) Because of tonight's presentation (regarding being more bear knowledgeable compared to a year ago) Thank you for the interesting presentation!
I prefer snail mail that I can keep
Already receive emails
Need info on bears that may not be shared publicly. Is there more than we know?
Let the bear population expand until conflict with humans is excessive. This will give more citizens the opportunity to see and appreciate the bear.
BEARS DO BITE.... AND MAY CLAW. A Typical Bear "attack mode" or method is a "stalk or hide to ambush" ... Then, at a time of the Bear's choosing, the "stalk or hide to ambush" may be followed by a "rush and tackle" often followed by move to turn back and finish you off. They will claw and bite you while you are down. This could also be described as: Run up from out of nowhere and "mow you down" {or tackle or knock you down}. Then, after knocking you over or tackling you turn back to claw/ bite/ maul... "Kill"... and at the leisure of the bear "eat". According to all knowledgeable sources {including people who live in bear populated areas} Bears will kill and eat Deer, Turkey, Elk, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, fox, moose, caribou, seals, squirrels, rabbits, berries, fruits, and "people". Bear are not particular about which animals they will kill and eat. Bears "if not shot" or killed by humans will lose all fear of humans. Alaskan Grizzly, Polar and Kodiak bears, "even though they are hunted", do not always fear humans. Children cannot usually positively and effectively defend themselves from bear attacks.

Do you consider yourself a hunter?

All Respondents:

51% of all respondents did not consider themselves a hunter

49% of all respondents considered themselves a hunter

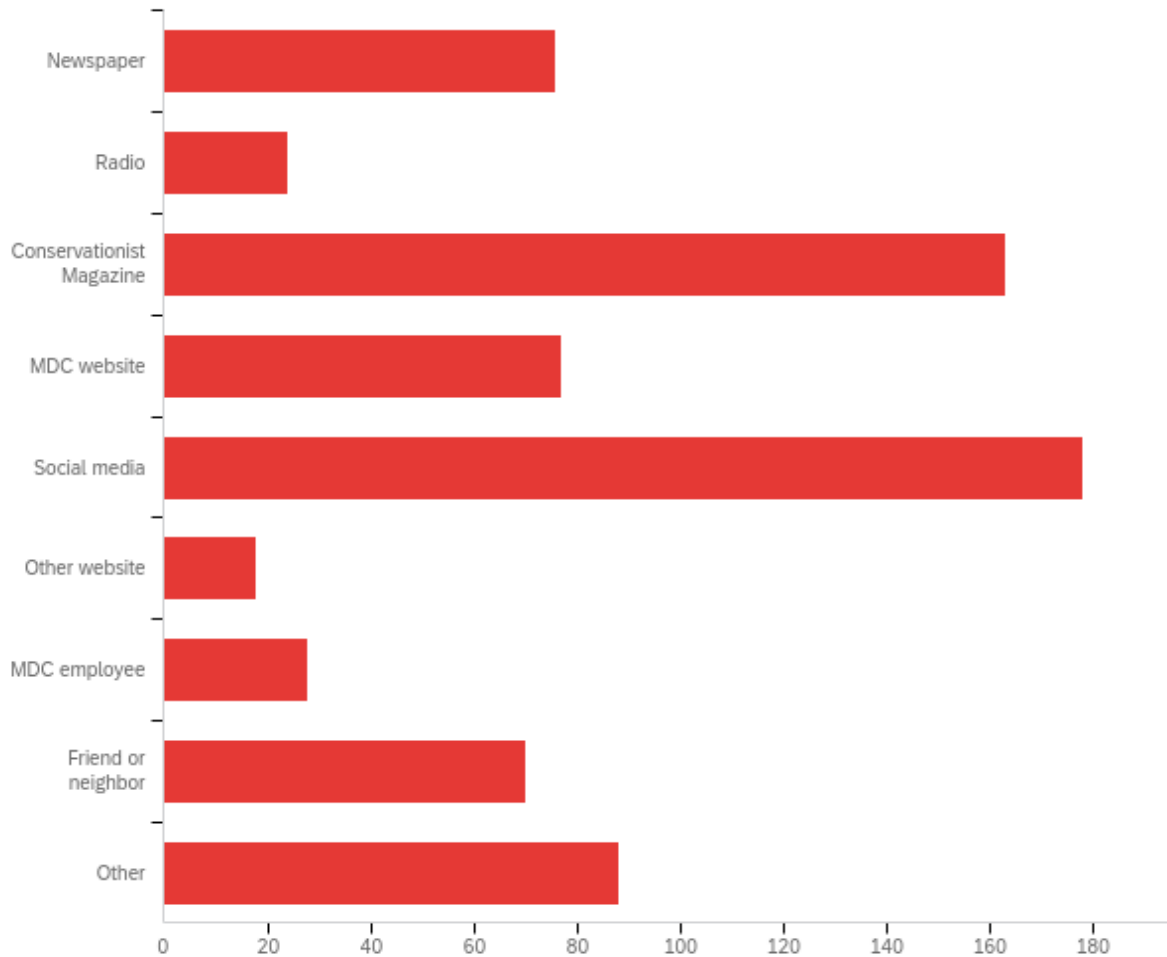


How did you hear about the Black Bear Open House?

All Respondents:

- 25% of all respondents heard about the black bear open houses from social media
- 22% of all respondents heard about the black bear open houses from the Conservationist Magazine
- 12% of all respondents heard about the black bear open houses from a different source (other)
- 11% of all respondents heard about the lack bear open houses from the newspaper
- 11% of all respondents heard about the black bear open houses from the MDC website
- 10% of all respondents heard about the black bear open houses from a friend or neighbor
- 4% of all respondents heard about the black bear open houses from an MDC employee
- 3% of all respondents heard about the black bear open houses from the radio
- 2% of all respondents heard about the black bear open houses from other websites

How did you hear about the Black Bear Open House?



The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is a name I can trust

All Respondents:

66% of all respondents strongly agree that MDC is a name they can trust

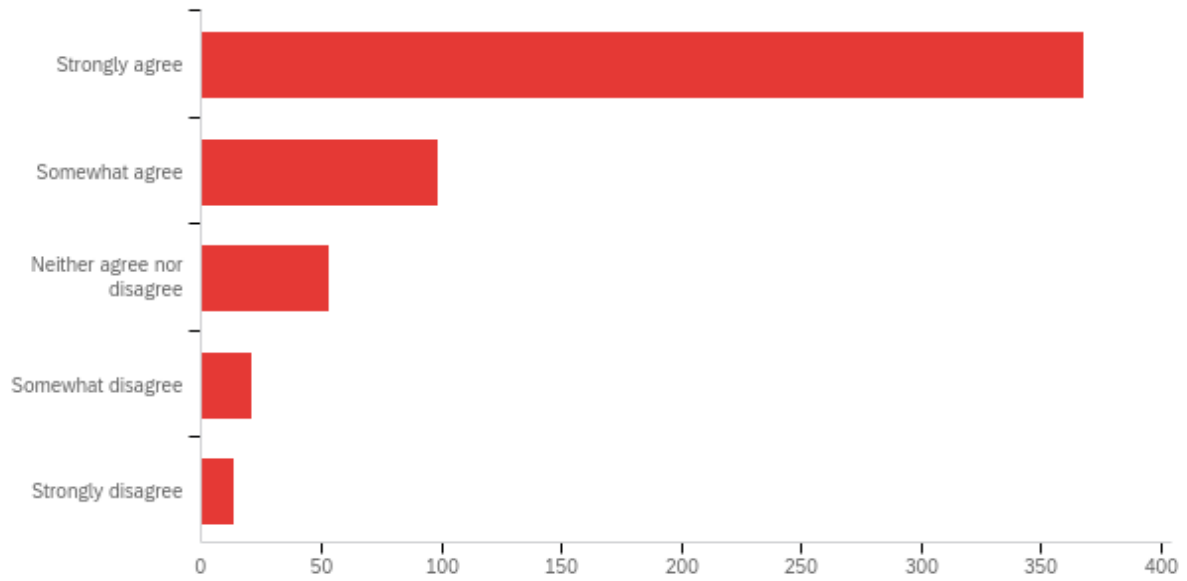
18% of all respondents somewhat agree that MDC is a name they can trust

10% of all respondents neither agree nor disagree that MDC is a name they can trust

4% of all respondents somewhat disagree that MDC is a name they can trust

3% of all respondents strongly disagree that MDC is a name they can trust

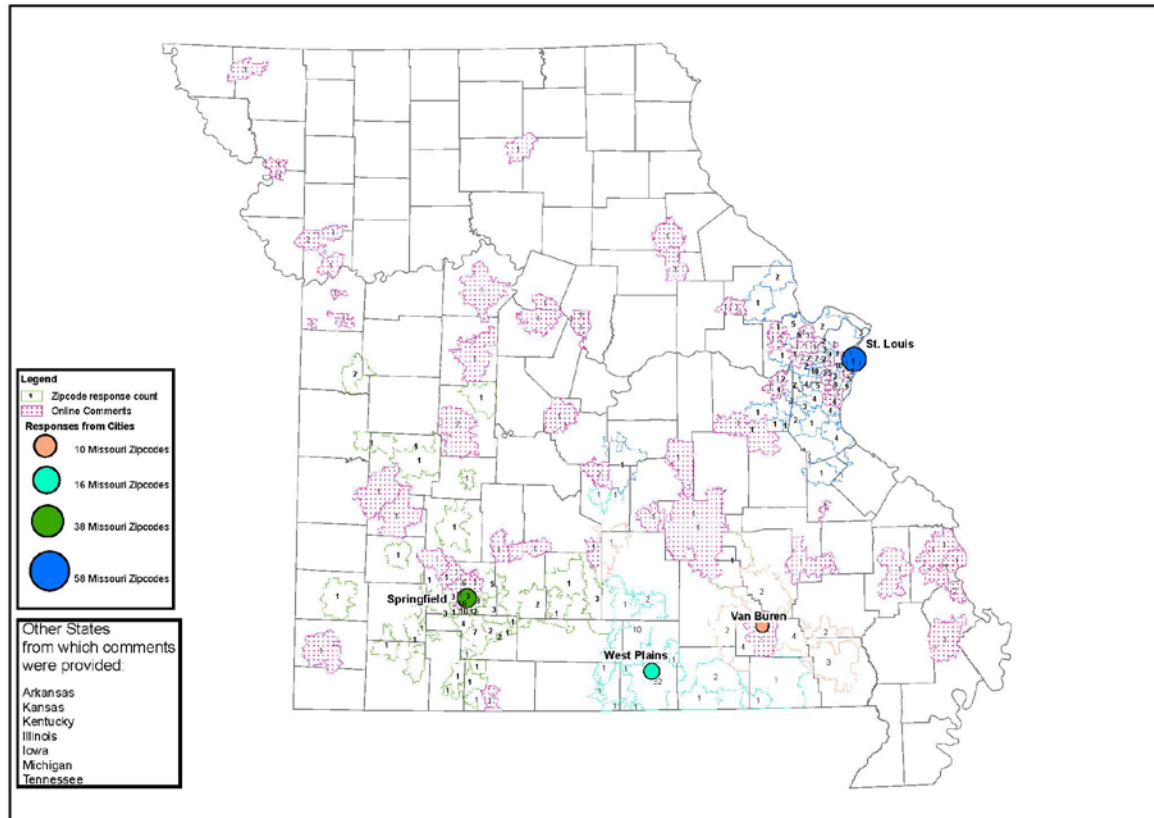
The Missouri Department of Conservation is a name I can trust



Appendix A

Map of Black Bear Responses

Black Bear Meeting Responses



Appendix B

All Comments by Topic

Black Bear Management Plan Goals and Objectives

Why do you feel the goals and objectives are not reasonable?

Recreational opportunities mean killing them, right? So, to get more money into MDC through population controlling efforts is best served by trophy hunts?
JoAnn and I have lived at the same location in Carter County 9 miles from the nearest town (Ellsinore) for 43 years. Beginning last year, we have seen what seems to be an atypical number of deer. I'm told the low number of acorns caused them to venture to more open areas. This ended up being 1. My Garden 2. Highway shoulders-many accidents and this spring 3. I can only speculate, the overabundance of "deer ticks" that we, in all our years, have never experienced before. Every day and sometimes in bed at night - after a bath (where no they hide?) One of us will need the other to tweezer them off also as bear proliferate and their behavior becomes bolder and their cubs learn from their mothers...You seem to indicate that you have it all under control, but what if the unexpected does happen?
Nowhere in the plan and or presentation is Agricultural producers mentioned. It appears that the Agricultural industry has been completely avoided in the plan and management.
Not if includes any type of trophy hunting them in the State of Missouri
The stated goals do not include the planned "trophy" hunting season on black bears, which is not necessary to control the black bear population and has not been shown to reduce human-bear interactions.
If by manage U mean trophy hunt, I disagree whole heartedly! The bears for that matter all wildlife are a Missouri treasure for us all to enjoy. This does not mean enjoy killing them and sticking them on your wall! This is a selfish act to pleasure yourself and kill a living being!
I do not believe it is reasonable to trophy hunt black bears that are intelligent, family-oriented, and cause no harm to people.
I am against the trophy hunting of black bears. First, I question the population number that the MDC has reached. The bear population is more likely in the range of 385 instead of the estimated number. Second, when a large dominant male is killed, younger males will move into the territory and kill the cubs. We've already seen black bear almost disappear in Missouri and they're just now bouncing back. Now is not the time to start killing them again.
Because Missouri does not have a problem with too many black bears. The problem is with uninformed people who don't know how to behave in areas where there are bears and with greedy politicians and hunters who think trophy hunting is a good idea because they can make money and they can kill things purely for sport.
Goal 1 population management and Goal 2 regarding human recreational activity
I'd like to wait a few more years to allow hunting. Their population is still under 400. While it's been determined that our black bear population went from 350 individuals in 2018 to between 540 and 840 bears in 2019, I think that's a high estimate. I own 43 acres in the Ozarks and the only nuisance animals we (my neighbors and I) have are feral hogs.

Where does it say that the MDC is going to allow Trophy Hunting on Missouri's Black Bear population? "Missouri black bears have barely recovered, but already the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is preparing to open up a trophy-hunting season on them."
Really, we have deer coming out of woodwork. They eat all the forest and more and we want to kill bear instead of greatly reducing the deer that have minimal acres to feed on. Think harder please!
Black bears have barely recovered in Missouri! Please do not allow hunting in Missouri of black bears!
Overall, these are acceptable goals; however, they are also broad and general allowing for loop holes. Goal 2: What does "use human dimensions" exactly mean? Is this a loop hole to justify using trophy hunting as a means of population management?
Not reasonable to support trophy hunting as means to control population when numbers are still so small. Too many hunters just like to shoot any and everything. Don't let our bear population be a subject for them.
Because they are already here and there needs to be an open season to hunt them
There must be hunting of bears or things just won't work.
Using science only to monitor need to use the public input also for factual since the public are the ones paying especially the ranchers and farmers who could be negatively affected
Doesn't including hunting to manage the population
Hunting tags need to be issued (yesterday)
Recreational opportunities for humans should not be included in the Black Bear Management Plan. There should not be a black bear hunting season in Missouri.
Don't feel like they need to be hunted or killed
Don't understand goal number 2
Would limit bear population; what does goal number 2 mean?
these goals do not list recreation, which is briefly mentioned in the draft and most likely the real impetus for this change in mission and management plan. these animals are no disrupting the ecosystem or threatening us in any way. there is no justification for hunting them. the vast majority of Missourians do not hunt and value wildlife in a nonconsumptive way. all of us pay the sales tax that supports this agency. yet, there does not appear to have been any real coordinated effort to minimize bear/human interactions thus far. that should be done in a meaningful way before killing them is even considered. the fact that this agency collects \$ from hunters and disproportionately represents their interests makes it difficult to call this agency trustworthy or credible.
Feel strongly about hunting wildlife - the conflict is not native wildlife but urban sprawl - management should be placed on the true invasive species - human overpopulation. Its inhumane and cruel. so the bottom line - the bears are not showing to be a nuisance - the focus is to encourage hunting them. This lecture appeared to be informative - but it's really to start the process of inhumane killing of innocent sentient beings.
Already must put up with deer eating up my garden and tracking up my lawn. Now I must put up with bears in my trash cans? Can I shoot a deer that is on my property? Of course not: I just have to put up with it like I do for the deer and coyotes!
Reading the details for Goal 1 it seems very vague...I would like to see more detail on what science-based methods means. Goal 2 is an emotional based goal...meaning if things are going well then there will be

little input for the public, but if something goes wrong at some point, the outcry will dictate a negative outcome
All you mean by management is how many do we need to kill. Then what? There will be more Bears within a couple years and you kill them again. Find ways to help the public avoid Bears. Teach how to avoid attracting them. Let them live. There are mothers killed in hunts and cubs who then suffer horrible deaths. It is inhumane. The science is based on outdated modes of management and it is time to stop killing our wildlife. We have killed off 60% plus of the wildlife on the planet in only 50 short years. Do the research. We must endeavor to protect them, not keep killing them. Why is there no plan to limit human encroachment into their territory? Why is the first response always to kill? Who sits on these boards? Are there any people who actually have the Bears best interest in mind or are they only hunters chomping at the bit to get out and kill a Bear for fun? I don't believe Missouri is trying hard enough to protect its wildlife and what happens if a large number of the population are killed and then some unforeseen event kills off the remaining bears? These decisions are made with the assumption everything will just continue as it has before, but the world is changing, disasters are all around us. It is time to rethink our policies of killing off wildlife just, so we feel remotely safe. Humans are not the only creatures god put on this Earth. Why do we think we have the right to kill so many animals just because we decide to? It is time to think outside the box and look at the bigger, long term picture.
THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO LET THEM BE HUNTED AND KILLED....
There are not enough bears to warrant hunting them. Studies have shown hunting increases numbers by increasing food supply to the remaining bears. This would make the issue worse. Please protect this animal. they are only beginning to make a comeback.
I OPPOSE any and all BEAR HUNTING as an option for management.
Bears are not a problem here.
The term "management" is so broad and euphemistic that anything is deemed a legitimate action. The MDC has a long history of a pro-hunting/pro-trapping policy. If in doubt, kill them. "Management" also implies a need for intervention, which is ridiculous considering what a wide margin of error is involved. You can't even get close to estimating the number of the bear population. I think the description of your management goals is insulting. It is framed in such a way as to con the public into believing you have the best interests of the animal population in mind.
NO BEAR HUNTING, PERIOD. Leave wildlife be wild. We keep taking habitat then we want to kill nature - NO.This seems to be an effort to draw in and out of state, despicable "trophy" hunters. Conserve our environment and leave the bears be.
Leave those poor bears alone. Instead of promoting killing and hunting bears, how about educating the public and lawmakers to stop tearing down habitats where the wildlife live?!?! Where are they supposed to go? We tear down their homes and then kill them when they come into our living space...guess what, they were here first! This needs to be explained to the public so they get energized to get lawmakers to start passing laws that prohibit cutting down natural areas, get the lawmakers to look at the big picture, not their pocketbook!
Black bears are not a problem in Missouri.
Bears are not a problem here. MDC's data is not convincing, and this appears to be an effort to attract out of state trophy hunters rather than conserve Missouri's environment. Do not let hunters kill the black bears!

I am STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ALLOWING BLACK BEARS TO BE HUNTED!
Some of the goals and objectives, specifically those that simply seek to gather better information on bear numbers and those addressing human-bear conflicts, are indeed reasonable. But the premise that active management of numbers is necessary at this time is not supported by data and the management tool of choice--hunting--is entirely wrongheaded. Please see my additional comments below for elaboration on those points.
These lovely creatures should be left to propagate and become what nature and God intended.
Your population management is hunting. Period. That is not population management, that is shooting bears. And the bears you shoot will just be replaced by more. That's a common-sense fact. No "science" is needed for that. You also state that you plan to manage a self-sustaining population. It's not self-sustaining if you are managing it. Sigh.

Additional comments on the Black Bear Management Plan's Goals and Objectives

Relocating "Problem Bears" from one agricultural area to another is irresponsible -- there should be a "one strike and you're out system". If the bear population is at a threshold to control/manage the population numbers, then this should not be an unreasonable approach.
Trophy hunting of the state's black bear population is totally unwarranted. There are only 300+ bears in the state. In any case trophy hunting has been shown in peer reviewed studies not to have any effect on human bear conflict.
We need to relocate them if they become overly populated not kill them.
I oppose the hunting season on black bears because it does not fulfill any of the stated objectives according to the available studies and reports by reputable organizations and experts.
PLEASE do not open trophy season on the black bears in MO. This is outrageous & unnecessary way to manage any issues. We love our black bears in MO & they are just beginning to recover!
What has happened to us in the state of Mo.? It makes me sad.
Please reconsider your plan to hunt bears
Do not permit trophy or other types of hunting as part of the management plan.
We do not support the trophy hunting of these highly social and intelligent animals. Leave them alone!
Until MDC stops playing into the hands and wallets of hunters, no plan is going to be truly effective, humane, moral or environmentally sound.
I am completely against trophy hunting of our bear population and believe you should stop and or prevent it.
Trophy hunting is unnecessary and cruel. We don't need more killing of our majestic wildlife and the promotion of killing. The bears can manage population growth biologically based on food sources.
Thank you for the opportunity to leave input.
The Injustice of the Innocent & Voiceless! All animals deserve lives free from human-inflicted suffering. As the highest created being, humans have a moral obligation to be wise stewards of animals. Just because we happen to be the most powerful species on earth, we humans have the ability, but not the right, to abuse the so-called lower animals. The ends do NOT justify the means!

We all know that there is something seriously wrong with a system where the best day of an animals life is the day that it is finally over!

Every Living Creature deserves the Right to Live as Nature has intended.

Not only do animal victims deserve to be free from abuse and neglect, but numerous studies show a correlation between animal cruelty and violence toward people animal cruelty impacts community safety.

If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men.

I am totally opposed to the proposed black bear hunt. The population has barely recovered to sustainable levels. Further, black bear populations will self-regulate based on available food sources Also, the projected growth in the population that you surmise is wildly overstated.

I wanted badly to attend the public meetings, but they conflicted with work-related travel. I support and trust MDC biologists to make science-based decisions. So, take this with a grain of salt, since I'm "only" an environmental engineer and not a biologist, but I wonder if the population goal of 500 bears statewide is too low. I like the idea of managing the population through hunting by the public. However, it's tough for me -- as a hunter -- to imagine having a prayer of success bagging something of which there are only 500 in the whole state. I'm excited to see this animal recovering in Missouri and would love to see them be as abundant as MDC biologists think is sustainable.

* Missouri's bear population is still small. The MDC has determined that our black bear population went from 350 individuals in 2018 to a number between 540 and 840 bears in 2019. That is impossible. According to studies, black bear annual growth rate is only between six and ten percent per annum "so at most, our population could only be 385 individuals in 2019.

* Trophy hunting is unnecessary for population control. Black bears, Missouri's largest-bodied carnivore, regulate their own populations based on food availability. For example, if a pregnant mother bear doesn't have enough body fat by the time she enters the den, her body will reabsorb her embryos and she will not give birth.

* Trophy hunting could negatively impact the bear population. Female bears don't reproduce until they are about three to five years old. A female will only produce a litter of about three cubs every other year and most of those cubs will not survive to their first year. Kill rates from trophy hunting exceed naturally-occurring mortalities, because trophy hunters kill adult breeding animals, which disrupts animal's societies and leads to even more deaths in their communities. For instance, once a big male bear is killed, incoming subadult male bears will try to kill the former male's offspring.

* Hunting does not reduce conflicts. Studying whether hunting bears would result in fewer human-bear conflicts, many peer-reviewed, published researchers found no evidence of a connected relationship between hunting a bear population and human safety. Availability of human food is often the root cause of most negative human-bear interactions, but trophy hunters generally remove non-problem bears from the population, and often attempt to target large, male bears to acquire an impressive trophy.

* Black bears are necessary to maintain a healthy ecosystem. They disperse seeds across vast distances even more seeds than birds, they open up canopies, and amend soils through their various behaviors. Black bears eat fruits and deposit them across long distances.

Goal #2 huh?
stated goals make good sense
I'd like to see a bear hunting season
Allow a season when numbers allow
Management of wildlife is to maintain them from being depleted. This is also achieved through permits by hunters to fund this valuable research and should continue to be a part of the management process.
Glad to see a species come back from the brink of extinction in Missouri! Can't wait for the time when seeing them regularly while in the woods becomes a real and be giving the chance to one day hunt them and feed myself, friends, and family from the harvested bear burgers and steaks!
Open a hunting season on them
I've seen bears and Cubs in mo. for at least 20 yrs. now and I believe it's time to figure out where the biggest populations are and draw a select few tags for certain counties and individuals be allowed to take one mature Male or female with no adolescent cubs.
Sometime in Black bear hunting season for minute so it is the number for Jeff and not have them over populated with Lowes just directions to people's properties and livestock leaving honeybees. It will also keep them from becoming overpopulated and dying from diseases or starvation.
Manage the population by hunting, with hounds and/or baiting. That is the best method to make sure a sow with cubs isn't being harvested. Don't give in to the Anti's tactics. Hunting is the best method, by those means.
I personally feel that if a harvest is needed. foot snares are the best management tool. a female or small cub could be released
Manage population through hunting
I've never hunted bear, but hunting should be a tool used by the Mo Department of Conservation to keep the population at a manageable level when and if the department decides on a population objective. License sales should also be a tool to provide funding for black bear management in Missouri. Don't let the anti's that come crawling out of the big cities and from other states that have no conception of wildlife management or where management funding comes from decide what happens in rural Missouri.
Taking the initiative to set all the goals in motion so that us Sportsmen and women can enjoy this renewable resource is amazing and we thank you.
Hunt them
Hope a hunting season is part of management when population is sustainable
I know there's one or two on the property I hunt near Everton. I've seen the scat and claw marks up a tree but wrote it off.
I'm glad to see a population growth and a hunting season someday.
Manage bear populations into huntable numbers
I BEG YOU PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW ANY HUNTING OF ANY KINDâ€, These beautiful animals are native to Missouri, & as such, DESERVE TO BE PROTECTED AT ALL TIMESâ€.
I trust MDC will, as usual, make the right decision regarding the future of our beautiful black bears.
Please don't allow trophy hunting of black bears.

I am concerned about a proposed trophy hunt because Missouri's bear population is still small. According to studies, black bear annual growth rate is only between six and ten percent per annum so at most, our population could only be 385 individuals in 2019 - still quite small.

Trophy hunting is unnecessary for population control. Black bears regulate their own populations based on food availability. For example, if a pregnant mother bear doesn't have enough body fat by the time she enters the den, her body will reabsorb her embryos and she will not give birth.

Trophy hunting could negatively impact the bear population. Female bears don't reproduce until they're about three to five years old. A female will only produce a litter of about three cubs every other year and most of those cubs will not survive to their first year. Kill rates from trophy hunting exceed naturally-occurring mortalities, because trophy hunters kill adult breeding animals, which disrupts animals' societies and leads to even more deaths in their communities. For instance, once a big male bear is killed, incoming subadult male bears will try to kill the former male's offspring.

Hunting does not reduce conflicts. Studying whether hunting bears would result in fewer human-bear conflicts, many peer-reviewed, published researchers found no evidence of a connected relationship between hunting a bear population and human safety. Availability of human food is often the root cause of most negative human-bear interactions, but trophy hunters generally remove non-problem bears from the population, and often attempt to target large, male bears to acquire an impressive trophy.

Black bears are necessary to maintain a healthy ecosystem. They disperse seeds across vast distances even more seeds than birds, they open up canopies, and amend soils through their various behaviors. Black bears eat fruits and deposit them across long distances. Evolution and natural selection have created a healthy community of life; we should not disrupt it.

I don't understand what you mean by "human dimensions".

Great starting point

Ideally yes, but the majority (?) of the city/county population could be uninformed to the program trying to be implemented. I fear that ecological concerns may not be the highest priority of all those possibly affected.

All decisions should be science based and ideally, I would hope the bears could maintain a population, otherwise too much time and money would be spent trying to maintain them. There needs to be a lot of outreach because too many people don't understand the importance of having a black bear population in MO. They often have unreasonable fear of the bears.

Especially the science - based methods. Reviewing success and failure of other wildlife management programs around the world is critical. Balancing the interest of different opinions will be a huge challenge. Please try to be balanced and rely on science rather than strong emotional reactions and special interest funding.

overall, I agree but I would like to see a greater emphasis on continuing the bear population to a certain range far away from residential areas.

I don't know what #2 means? What is human dimensions?

I like the idea of expansion to a reasonable level and have limited controlled season by drawing

What are "human dimensions"?

so, I would be scared to death if I saw a bear so I think that minimizing and addressing human/bear conflicts.

because the plan is science based and would seem to balance various interests.

Overall, I agree with the management plan. I am totally against hunting them simply because the population says it is sustainable. Start with human-bear conflicts and require humans to remove attractants. Deal with problem bears until establishing a hunting season is a must!
Because as the animals expand into populated areas people need to be educated so that human-bear interactions can be as positive as possible for both individuals. Our neighbor puts out 50# of corn a week for the deer. He doesn't feed the squirrels, possums, raccoons, rabbits, skunks etc. And he can't figure out why we have coyotes that might eat our dogs! If the same thing was to happen with a bear the outcome could be disastrous for both
Though I would think goals #4 & 3 could be reversed. At this point I would like to see more information being circulated concerning bear awareness, in order to reduce conflicts, rather than simply addressing issues as they arise.
But I would also like to see an emphasis on protecting large blocks of habitat so species like the black bear can thrive in Missouri, I support significant expansion of public lands in Missouri focusing on large core reserves and protected migration corridors between them. We need to do more to protect/restore all species that historically existed in Missouri.
I support efforts to establish a viable population. I have acreage in Cuba, MO area and would hope bears would pass through. I would support a hunting season.
But, I would also like to see MDC push harder for increasing purchase of public lands available for greater suitable bear habitat.
Keep up the good works
I hope we do not rush into hunting black bears
I do feel that there should be more emphasis on insuring adequate habitat for a growing population of bears. The state, counties, and municipalities should insure that human development (new subdivisions, etc.) does not encroach on habitat that is vital not only for the bears but other wildlife in Missouri. I think it is too early to be thinking about hunting bears until the habitat issue is addressed.
I believe implementing a black bear season for hunters in Missouri is a good way to increase funding for conservation efforts.
My answer is based upon tonight's presentation. I think I should further research the bear management plan to have a better understanding of the plan.
Need to hit # 3 & 4. I am dubious of political influence regarding reintroduced species: elk, otter, bear. I am suspect pressure to open limited hunting and or trapping.
I support the return of the black bear to Missouri. Educating the public is necessary to keep both bears and people safe but both can and should co-exist.
I would like to see bear management that does not involve hunting. Under 1000 bears does not seem like a huge number. I would like to see wildlife preserved not personal and financial gain emphasized.
I am excited that there will be programs to protect & manage the Black Bears.
You say the goals and objectives as if you are planning how many cars you are going to sell. These are living beings with every right to live that we have. By relegating them to spread sheet statistics you mitigate their actual value as living, breathing beings.
Please make increasing bear habitat a goal in the plan. Provide even more education about the importance of a healthy bear population in MO and thus a tolerance for them.

LET THEM THRIVE AND YOUR CWD IN DEER WILL GO AWAY.
Humans need to stop encroaching up wildlife habitat.
I feel like with the climate change, Mo. has plenty of room and water to help sustain them. We don't always have sensible Human to keep them safe. Thank you for trying to educate. This is the only way they survive. I hope Mo. Can handle their arrival. I'm in for sure.
Killing bears is wrong
As much as I am looking forward to a bear hunting season, I have to say I think your projective numbers are too low. It seems to me that bear hunting should not be implemented before there are at least 1000 bear in the state, 1500 would be better. I want bear hunting season. I love black bear meat (had it in Virginia once). But not at the potential detriment to the bear population.
I oppose bear hunting in MO. Plans for hunting them don't appear to be connected to conservation, but a method for attracting trophy hunters.
Just no killing!!
By MDC's own count, there are less than 1,000 bears in the entire state of Missouri. This is not a problem. The entire project appears to be covering to allow out of state trophy hunters. Shame on you.
Please don't allow hunting of black bears! Humans need to stop encroaching on and destroying animal habitats rather than continuing to urban sprawl all over the place and then kill off the wildlife that inconveniences us. And penning up for hunting because a bunch of trophy hunters want to add black bears to the list of animals they've killed is sick.
Do NOT allow hunting as a way of "managing" black bears.
I oppose bear hunting in Missouri at this time. The claim that bears are a threat is not convincing and does not seem to reflect "scientific methods". This seems to be an excuse to attract trophy hunters from other states, rather than to protect Missouri's environment.
Bears are NOT a problem here. NO BEAR HUNTING, PERIOD. Leave wildlife be wild. We keep taking habitat then we want to kill nature - NO. This seems to be an effort to draw in and out of state, despicable "trophy" hunters. Conserve our environment and leave the bears be. Teach people to live among bears, cover trash etc. The answer should NEVER be to KILL.
It is inhumane to hunt black bears. The idea that they are becoming a nuisance is unwarranted. They have just as much of a right, if not more to roam freely this beautiful place they call home. There is more than enough room to share. If anything is a nuisance in this world, it is the human population.
PLEASE ACT ON BEHALF OF BLACK BEARS IN MISSOURI FOR THEIR PROTECTION AND DO NOT PERMIT THEM TO BE HUNTED!
While the goals are broadly unobjectionable, aspects of them and certain objectives are clearly incompatible with science-based management of black bears. But at the outset it must be stated that the state has not shown that bear populations will not in fact be self-regulating, based on available food sources and the territorial needs of individual bears. There should be a clear demonstration that those populations are not self-regulating before there is any consideration of a management plan that attempts to intervene in the natural ecosystem relationships of which the bears are a part.
Goal 1 and Objective 1.1 seek to give the state the authority to "manage" bear populations, based on "biological and social carrying capacities," and use "regulated harvest" to "maintain those numbers."

Given that the state has not even roughly determined the current population nor shown the means by which it would do so, it is highly dubious that the state is capable of determining biological capacities for particular ecoregions in the state or for the state as a whole. There certainly are no "science-based" grounds shown for the 2008 "benchmark" of 500 bears. Given the nice round number and that it was produced two years before any population research was undertaken (see Draft, p. 4), it's safe to assume that the benchmark is completely arbitrary. Before the state even starts to consider methods for management, it should establish its ability, in peer-reviewed science journals, to accurately determine both numbers of bears and biological carrying capacity of relevant ecoregions within the state.

The use of "social carrying capacities" is not science-based on its face; there is no such thing. It would amount to the state using subjective criteria, which would likely be influenced by hunting interests, to assess "data" gathered through opinion surveys. By what standard would it be determined whose opinions would be sought, and how would those opinions (e.g., local residents vs other concerned parties) be weighted? As a social scientist, I find the search for "social carrying capacities" to be an entirely invalid venture.

It is clear that permitting "regulated harvest," i.e., hunting, is really the purpose of this management plan, and that the determination of "biological and social carrying capacities" is simply a mechanism for establishing how many bears will be killed on an annual basis. The use of surveys to "understand...support of recreational activities" (i.e., hunting) is evidently intended to show public acceptance of, and thereby legitimize, bear hunting as a management tool. There are two problems with specifying hunting as the management tool of choice: First, it is in conflict with natural population regulatory processes that would reduce numbers through mortality of old, sick, injured, or very young bears, thus maintaining a strong gene pool. Hunters, to the extent that they discriminate at all among potential victims, would draw to those bears that would make more impressive trophies, i.e., the largest and healthiest bears--the very ones that should be retained in the population. Second, the use of hunting creates incentives to increase the numbers of bears hunted to satisfy demands of hunters (some of whom would come from out of state for a chance at trophies) and to increase revenue for the state through hunting permits. There should be no incentives in place that would corrupt--as they certainly would--the "science-based" management of bears.

The gathering of information on bear populations, to better understand their ecosystem role, is a fine goal for the state, as are programs to minimize human-bear conflicts. It should be emphasized with the latter that those programs would focus on what humans can do to reduce conflicts. We are the ones most likely to initiate conflicts by our behavior and given our far greater capacity to consciously modify such behavior, it is incumbent on us to make any necessary changes. We should not punish the bears for conflicts that we in fact engender.

The idea of bears in Missouri is exciting to me. We have to learn how to live with that awareness

The public may not always be able to read between your lines, but we're also not stupid. You are simply allowing the rural hunters and out-of-state interests to kill the few bears that nature is allowing here in MO. Stop it! Leave the bears alone and just hope that maybe someday we really might have a nuisance problem, THEN you can push through your hunting proposition.

Black Bear Research and Management

Why would you like to see a black bear in the wild in Missouri?

Think it would be neat.
I support the presence of native species.
THIS IS THEIR HOME
I THINK THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL ANIMALS
HAVING BLACK BEARS BACK IN MISSOURI HELPS WITH DIVERSITY AND WILL BRING WILDLIFE BACK TO ITS HISTORICAL RANGE
To learn more about the habitat and the bears habits.
Because they were a vital part of the ecosystem in the past and nearly wiped out.
Why not? I love bears.
GENERAL INTRIGUE IN THE ANIMAL AND INTERESTED IN A DIVERSE ECOSYSTEM
BECAUSE IT WILL SHOW IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE BLACK BEARS COEXIST WITH OTHERS IN NATURE AGAIN
They are fascinating animals.
I VALUE CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT
Curious. We'd rather see one than be surprised.
THE BEAR POPULATION IS GROWING RAPIDLY. I HAVE SEEN 8 DIFFERENT BEARS ON CAMERA THIS YEAR.
Different animal world.
Maybe depends on situation.
I want to take some pictures.
I enjoy watching wildlife of all kinds.
I LIKE TO SEE THE LANDSCAPE RESTORED TO ITS ORIGINAL STATE
NATIVE SPECIES
We love bears
Being from Missouri I like seeing more bears
Nature Creature
BECAUSE THEY BELONG HERE. THEY WERE HERE FIRST.
They are a key species to our area.
promotion of native species
love wild life
Bucket List
They are interesting and impressive!
They belong here as well as we do
I enjoy a variety of wildlife
Just love nature if they would stay out of the trash
wildlife enthusiast interested in protecting bears and keeping both bears and humans safe.

love of wildlife re-establishment
but not up close
just for the experience
to add more hunting opportunities and bring back wild animals to the state
I enjoy spending time in nature and try to photograph plants, animals, scenery, etc. whenever I can, and seeing a bear or other rare animal for me would be wonderful.
They deserve a chance to repopulate their natural habitat.
I think they are a beautiful animal.
Because I would like to see them reestablished and thriving in these natural habitats
Black bears are part of Missouri wildlife. We love seeing our wildlife flourish.
They are a great addition to MO ecosystem
I'd like to hunt them. They were here before we were and should stay.
They are part of nature, absent for so long.
if properly managed
Have seen deer, turkey, buffalo, & elk. Why not a bear in my back yard!
Indicates a return to a balanced wildlife & management.
They are beautiful
I enjoy seeing any species of wildlife, especially those that are uncommon (I can remember when there were no deer or turkey in West Kentucky.
to enjoy the encounter/sighting
bears have been within 3 miles of our home
Neat animal
Native to Missouri
It signifies the transition to "re-wild" native species and habitat.
To confirm we actually still have them for future generations
They are amazing creatures, part of nature, to open them up to trophy hunting is HORRIBLE
that's where they belong! they were here first!
Because, like most people who love wilderness, I welcome the sight of all native, charismatic mega-fauna. My only concern with their expansion is the impact they might have on whitetail deer fawn survival, but we'll probably need a lot more bears before that becomes an issue.
YES! To see wildlife in their natural habitat is an amazing experience. I also respect wildlife and would definitely want to keep my distance. It's not fair to the majority of Missouri and other U.S. residents who want wildlife to thrive and possibly see them in the wild, to allow them to be killed for a few trophy-hunters. Killing animals is not "population management" and 500-850 bears is not a huge population that needs to be controlled. It's your responsibility as a department of conservation to humanely manage wildlife population and educate the public to avoid humane-wildlife conflicts.
Only allow growth as population and habitat match up number wise.
I spend a lot of time in Mark Twain Forest from the backbone up to the forest road 418 area, nice to see tracks

Exciting; Wildlife-but at a distance.
Shows they're not going extinct.
Very neat animal.
It would be a unique experience
I've seen three with one in Texas, Shannon, and Howell counties.
I enjoy seeing all types of wildlife in my home state and within my local area (Howell County)
To Hunt
That means the population is healthy.
It's their forest too
I believe our natural resources could support some more than we currently have.
Saw them in Yukon Territory in the 60's, may be my last chance. I respect and honor nature.
They are interesting, they belong here. They add to the experience of our outdoors
unusual, somewhat rare
I like to see wild animals.
I enjoy watching them
I love wildlife
Because bears are indicative of a healthy forest.
to enjoy the view
I'm fascinated with them
Neat creatures
I am enjoying nature
For a huntable population.
Black Bears are in general a very docile animal. I feel there is a need for the Black Bear in the ecosystem of Missouri.
Interested in all wildlife. Healthy ecosystem
much like the deer and turkey that were once nearly wiped out, bears are again living in Missouri
Hunting
Native species belong in their native range.
It's part of nature!
I love seeing all wild animals
Just a beautiful sight in nature and if there's ever a season
They are just another predator, but definitely will need a season to keep them in check.
I've never seen a bear in the wild first off. Plus, I'd love to hunt them without driving 1000 miles away
Just because
So I can hunt it and have meat for my entire family.
They belong here and should have a good life here in mo
I want to be able to hunt a black bear in mo It's my dream hunt and I'd love to do it in my home turf.

I love seeing any animal that was once native to our great state and would live the opportunity to help manage their population.
They are awesome creatures that are misunderstood. They are scared of us. People in urban areas don't understand. To have a hunting season as well.
Because that is where they live and is natural. Seeing them would mean they are not extinct
We are living in their native range and we have an obligation to keep their suitable habitat open and flourishing
They are beautiful and majestic. They were once abundant here.
There is one on my property N of Hwy 30 in Dittmer. Reported to Lexis Ritter
Curiosity - watch behavior
Curiosity
From a distance.
I think they are a pretty animal
All animals should be returned to their historic range
Love seeing animals of all types of four legged ones that is!
I hunt black bear in Canada and the population is large and the selection is rewarding
At a safe distance.
We wouldn't have to drive all the way to Great Smokey Mountain Ntl Park in order to see black bear.
Black bears are an integral part of nature and no ecosystem can be complete without them and or grizzlies.
Enhances the outdoor experience
They were originally here, they should be reinstated
I know they have habitant and we can live alongside them.
I love to see wild life diversity. Especially, the return of precious natural wildlife such as black bears.
Exciting
from a distance...their presence must be an indicator of a healthier environment.
Love natural things
Part of nature - natural hunter of berries and veg
I'm curious
It would be exciting to see.
It would be great to see one though a bit scary.
Hunttable population
I have seen tracks near current river. powder mill ferry.
I believe that populations of native species have a place in the Missouri ecosystem. I would like to see a black bear at a safe distance.
because I like to see wildlife in its natural settings
They are wonderful.
Because it would be something cool to see in the wild

to photograph
I enjoy seeing native wildlife
enjoy all kinds of free roaming wildlife
Nature coming back in balance means here is still plenty of wild space.
Interested in wildlife but want to stay safe
Because black bears are very cool animals
Only if I'm allowed to kill it.
It is a sign of improved forest health when the animals begin to return. Would love to see the mountain lion return as well.
see them in natural habitat, not a zoo
I like wildlife
It would be an exciting experience.
just to interface safely for the bear
Part of native ecosystem
because once upon a time they roamed Missouri
I enjoy watching wildlife from a safe distance.
They belong here
I enjoy all types of wildlife and hunting opps
I have seen plenty in other states, would like to see one in ours
From a distance only :)
As a species that was once native to the area I feel it is a sign of a healthy ecosystem if bear populations returned
These animals were here before us. Only makes sense they should be here now.
bears are amazing. I respect and honor all animals
It's nature. Everything is nature is beautiful and correct
all nature should be valued
I am always willing to see something wild in its own habitat.
I hike. Love seeing wildlife
it makes me feel like our conservation program is successful and we have plenty of healthy habitat in our state forests
would like to see one on our game camera on our land in Reynolds County
I enjoy viewing animals (from a distance)
Yes, from a distance!
I think it would be amazing to see a bear in its natural habitat
Because they are beautiful and amazing creatures
Indication of a returning growing population to return ecosystem into former balance
knowing they are making a comeback

while black bears can be a nuisance, they are not a threat to human life. I believe their presence is a good sign of the health of our state
Need for re-establishment of native species that were once populated in the state
love seeing all kinds of wildlife when in the woods. each experience is unique and memorable.
Would add to the excitement of hunting.
From a distance
black bears are a part of Missouri and are
I value our native wildlife. I would like to see one from a distance and let it live its life.
because they are part of the ecosystem and deserve more rights to be here. they are precious wildlife that deserves to thrive and have their own lives without human predators
As long as it is not in people's back yards or weekend homes.
If there is room for them and people
I appreciate the fact that a healthy bear population indicates a healthy environment
Love to observe wildlife, especially rare to see wildlife.
I feel this could help define our outdoor wildlife efforts in bringing the black bears back to Missouri.
Important for the whole system of nature.
They are majestic animals and native to the state.
I like bears. I would love to see a grizzly bear but living in the wonderful city I live in all I see is crime.
I would like to have the experience of seeing one in the wild.
Curiosity and novelty, unique symbol of the truly "wild"
Nature!
Only if it's in the woods far from my home. It's nice that bears are not becoming extinct, but I worry about them showing up in my yard.
I am gratified by seeing a native species in their native habitat.
Only by accident.
Part of nature and want to see now Minnesota has many bears and great to see them and wolves.
Very interested in the seeing new species in person and for the potential hunting opportunity.
Love of nature. They were here before me.
Would like there to be room for all native wildlife. I am an avid wildlife watcher.
For the experience.
I love wildlife
Seen them in Smokey Mountain N/P
It's still a natural world
To see bears in their natural environment.
I like watching all native wild live.
It's closer than the Smokies
curiosity
Because it belongs here

Because I think it would be a beautiful experience.
but not in my backyard
Just to experience see one at a safe distance. (I like to view all wildlife.)
Missouri was their home and still is their home
They are beautiful animals like deer
It would be a great experience
Cause they belong
I support the growing black bear population in the region and would like to see it thrive.
Nature rocks
They are magnificent animal
Having an apex predator in the state is a great indicator of ecosystem health.
wildlife enthusiast
At a safe distance of course! Seeing a black bear would indicate there are still acres unhindered by humans where bears are able to forage.
Enjoyment of seeing wildlife.
Some of my most meaningful experiences come from observing nature. Plus, if humans are to survive we must protect the natural fabric upon which we depend.
Exciting to see in natural habitat
species diversity
Enjoy wildlife
I just love wildlife and Missouri landscape North to South East to West
I have always had a fascination with black bears and would like to see them back in their original habitat.
The black bear is an important symbol of the viability of our environment
They are beautiful animals and it is an indicator of a healthy environment capable of sustaining them
Bringing back the natural fauna to Missouri
There's no substitute for seeing any wildlife in a natural setting
Enjoyment of seeing animals in their natural environment.
It would be great to see black bears in their natural habitat.
They are a part of the natural landscape.
Evidence of a successful population
I would be interested to observe.
I enjoy seeing wildlife in their natural setting
I love seeing wildlife and would like the opportunity to hunt bears.
It would be cool, education, interesting. Just not running through my camp!
It was once part of the ecosystem and should be allowed to repopulate.
I enjoy watching the bears in action
I'd like them to reclaim their place in this natural ecological food chain and they're an amazing creature
Saw them in Georgia and Wyoming why not Missouri

They are a native species. Saw a number when I live in the mountains of Colorado.
Beautiful, awesome, and natural!
Missouri is the natural home to bears
They are an important part of our ecosystems and magnificent creatures.
Black bears are part of a healthy ecosystem. They are part of the wonder of nature.
IT MEANS THEY HAVE COME HOME.
They were here first and there is only so much land that can be shared.
It would be great to see black bears back in their natural habitat.
To remind me that we still have a chance to save the planet and the creatures that inhabit our planet.
Because they are native animals. And they are absolutely amazing
So I can check "Yes" to previous question.
We see black bears in other spots (like Yosemite, Yellowstone, Rocky Mtn National Parks) & would love to see them elsewhere.
Because it's part of nature.
It's called Mother Nature and I Love it.
I've never seen one before. I don't think the populations need to be controlled because black bears are pretty docile. If I am not seeing any black bears, that leaves the very few out there to be killed off by trophy hunters. I wouldn't be worried about black bears unless I saw MANY in the wild. But I have seen none at all, which I feel doesn't make sense for humans to consider allowing them to be hunted.
This is where they belong.
They are magnificent creatures
I enjoy seeing native wildlife.
They should be allowed in their natural habitat.
For the most innocent reason, they are God's creatures, and you see the beauty of it.
Never seen one
They are wonderful addition to Missouri.
Because they are a necessary part of nature!
We need better balance in nature

Why would you not like to see a black bear in the wild in Missouri?

Bears are known to be a threat to human civilization and pose a significant risk to the motoring public.
I bank fish with my dog, and I am not interested in my dog and the bear coming in contact with each other.
IT IS SCARY
Respect for the bear
may be dangerous. Bear off highway I76 East of 65 about 3/4 mile
because they are huge and run fast! Even if I'd shake my keys I'd still be afraid.
I am uneasy with having an animal near my home that has the capacity to kill people & cause substantial property damage.

increases human/animal conflict
I raise multiple species of livestock for a living and have had a large animal attack in recent years and found the MDC agent in the area to be unqualified to handle wild large animal management. I found the agent to have poor communication skills and mildly obnoxious. A raccoon and salamander specialist are not properly educated or experienced to make the statements that this agent made. It was an overall very negative experience.
I don't want them habituated to humans in any way. They are wild animals. If I want to see a bear, I will go to the zoo.
Not sure if I want to see a bear, it depends on the distance
afraid
Because I hike usually with just my dogs.
Me don't need them
I have not seen a bear in Missouri but have seen many in Wisconsin. No opinion-except only if become a nuisance
I personally do not feel the desire to see them up close. If I were to come across one on accident, I would not be upset. I am not going to seek them out though.
Scared
Dangerous
would not like to hunt or camp with wild bears present - - but I would co-exist with wild bears by proper education and understanding
Afraid of confrontation
I would be scared unless I had protection of some kind.
I would rather not see a bear in case of conflict
Ambivalent, scared of bears but we need apex predators besides ourselves to maintain healthy animal populations generally
I feel if I did I would be very scared.
In the wild they play a role in health environmental balance. (I may not want to "see" it)
They will be in my yard shortly if they are in Missouri!
I do not like having to carry a gun, I spend much time in the woods.
scared of them
Probably because I am afraid that I might be attack even though I know this would probably not happen.
I would have to be extra careful when walking or hunting in the woods.
They are wild. Nature is not a zoo.
I am indifferent on this question.

Why do you think the black bear population should be allowed to grow?

Black bear is native and should be here.
WITH MANAGEMENT
RE-ESTABLISH POPULATION

BECAUSE THEY ARE PART OF NATURE AND THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL
HOPEFULLY TO EVENTUALLY PROVIDE HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES
Bears are just now starting to be established here.
I feel that their population is still gaining a foot hold in the state and is still vulnerable.
NOT SURE
THEY WERE HERE BEFORE US
PART OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND RETURN NATIVE SPECIES
I AM OK WITH WHATEVER THE ENVIRONMENT CAN SUPPORT
Variety of animals.
IN A CAREFULLY MANAGE FASHION AIMED AT HEALTHY POPULATION MINIMIZING HAZARDS TO HUMANS
I DON'T FEEL LIKE WE HAVE A SUSTAINABLE POPULATION FOR HUNTING OPPORTUNITY
Bring back the natural predator
EXPAND THEIR RANGE BUT NOT GROWING IN AREAS OF HIGH POPULATIONS WHERE THEY'RE ENTERING TOWNS, AND BECOMING PROBLEMATIC
With management
Growth w/ management.
THAT IS THE NATURAL ORDER OF WILDLIFE
We need a sustainable population in Mo.
promotion of native species in native ranges at an appropriate carrying capacity
more game to hunt
They're cool!
To allow a safe harvestable population
Because other people think it should not.
while the estimated population is stated at 540-840, thats a difference of 300 bears +/- . We need more time for the population to grow.
natural progression
to have a reasonable native population
as long as the resources are available
I think it should be allowed to grow until it becomes a problem, such as too many negative incidents in a small geographic range.
Not a problem population currently
I say yes but only if habitat can support
Our wildlife should flourish.
They should grow but people need to leave them alone.
I think it would benefit MO to have an established manageable population
They are native and should be allowed a sustainable population.
To the point that they are in balance with their natural food sources.

again if managed
It's nice seeing them in the wild
every animal deserves a place to live
So, people can see them
Until it reaches the ecosystem or cultural carrying capacity.
to allow citizens to enjoy hunting seasons
Grow until the population can support hunting
Within reasonable limits
Native species deserve the right to flourish
like so many other animals, I do not want to see them extinct.
Because based upon statistics of how many cubs could have been born, the numbers the dept of conservation is saying exist, the data cannot be accurate. WE DO NOT NEED TO OPEN BLACK BEARS UP FOR TROPHY HUNTING!
it's natural
Because the existing population is insufficient and bear populations are good for the ecosystem. They disperse seeds across vast distances even more seeds than birds, they open up canopies, and amend soils through their various behaviors. Black bears eat fruits and deposit them across long distances.
Because 500 animals still sound to me like a pitifully low number. If you consider only the area south of I-44 (their primary range thus far), that's a density of only one bear for every 50 square miles. How in the hell are you going to hunt an animal successfully with a population that sparse?
I explained above - 500-840 is not a huge number and most bears are never seen. How have you determined the population size?
Wildlife in Arkansas works fine with bears.
Within limits, minimal conflict with humans being important
Because these are God's animals.
They are part of the ecological balance of nature.
With more bears, the opportunity to harvest one would increase.
Didn't mark either: "Undecided on what is optimum population"
I don't care if it grows or doesn't
But at a managed rate
In a world where a large percentage of animals, fish, plants and insects are extinct or endangered, we should allow a population to thrive, rather than decrease.
To a certain extent. Too much of anything not good.
Maybe the bear population should be allowed to grow. I trust you all to know the answer to that question. If we have habitat available to sustain more bears, then let them grow
grow to reasonable population
So, they can be eventually hunted by our children again.
To offer more opportunity for trophy hunting
not sure

more opportunity for a sighting
It'll be good for overall conservation in MO
To provide future opportunities for hunting and recreation.
For a huntable population. Whitetail fawn recruitment must be addressed in the management policies.
Bears have always been a part of Missouri and that should continue
they are not causing a problem
I believe the population should be allowed to grow so long as the department deems it manageable and stays within the limitations of its ecosystem
I think it should be managed with hunting.
Let the population grow to where there will be a higher likely hood of filling a tag and have more tags available
That way so we don't lose the population to bad things mother nature does or to poachers
To sustain a population.
Grow within reason.
To eat some of those hogs you turned loose
I am conflicted on this but to be able to please anti-hunting nuts and my need for more food, I don't see why there couldn't be a spring or fall season
I like having bears in Mo
To help control deer populations and allow for a more feasible hunting season for them in our home state.
Black bears are native to Missouri and help the ecosystem in ways many citizens do not fully understand. I believe allowing them to grow would help Missouri similar to how the wolf population being reintroduced in Yellowstone has helped.
3000
Same as we do with the human population, we do not need to regulate nature.
Selfishly, I'd like to see them closer to me, so we can observe how they fit back in where they originally were.
Their range needs to expand into all suitable habitat statewide.
More MO native wildlife is good for the environment.
Managed Growth
So, more people have a chance to see them
Only if it is safe for all
Part of nature. need to carefully watch over so they don't encroach too much on cities.
Maybe someday they will be enough to have a hunting season.
They were here before us.
Let their range grow to the limits of our habitat.
Better opportunity for hunting.
Might increase our chances of seeing them in the wild
Just because the numbers are growing now does not mean they will continue to do so. Man has a horrible misconception about bears and all predators.

Within limit
Smart conservation
Bears are part of the original state fauna. They should be a reasonable number to be in the state.
Part of history
A healthy population of any organism has factors controlling it's populations size.
Limits should be set after research is considered
Very interesting to know about.
Only if the carrying capacity is sustainable.
part of the ecosystem
depending on human conflict issues.
Bears should be able to exist in balance with the rest of the Missouri ecosystems. Studies will need to be on-going to study and re-evaluate with the appropriate population should be in balance with other species.
Do not hunt them yet.
We do not want them to go extinct, but it would be cool to get to have them to hunt
A strong self-sustaining population would be nice
to a sustainable number, but too many will lead ag and human conflict
So we can see more of them in the wild
I hear it is currently growing
I like animals
No opinion
grow per a developed plan
history
just like any other animal
There were a lot of bears here 100 plus years ago
only as far as wild habitat can sustain
To support a healthy ecosystem
This iconic animal roamed the Ozarks for thousands of years. I want them on the landscape.
we have a lot of acreage and would love to know bears are there.
*to a certain degree
Hunting if controlled
to maintain nature
They are a native species and belong in the state.
They're native and should be allowed to live and thrive in their habitat
it does not seem to be too large and is not encroaching on populated areas
animals were here before humans
They're a native species
They were here before we were

due to other areas diminishing possible then they need somewhere to go. also, doing this saves them does it not?
Within reason, needs to be controlled
to a point
Would add to the excitement of the hunt.
Bears are a part of nature and affect the ecosystem in many ways
nature regulates populations if we stay out of the way. human intervention causes unintended consequences.
why not? what and who determines their fate. that's insane to ask this question.
Black bears don't generally cause a threat to people.
I trust the Missouri Conservation Department to know
Up to the point of balancing population with bear related problems
fill their niche in Missouri probably will benefit other wildlife
They were her first we need to control people population not the animals
They are native to our state.
Healthy ecosystem component
Native to MO. Beautiful to see
Only to a level that's safe--not like the deer that are taking over my yard.
I feel that having a large native terrestrial keystone species like the black bear in Missouri provides benefits such as forest regeneration, clean water, natural pest control, seed dispersal, disease regulation, and improves our overall natural ecosystems.
But not unlimitedly
Strong population before hunting
We should restore the population to the capacity of the habitat. Bears are a part of our ecosystem.
for potential future hunting opportunities
Within limits, so as not to cause stress on the bears or the humans.
Until it reaches carrying capacity
Yes, until they become a nuisance.
Bears are considered a keystone species which other wildlife and fauna will greatly benefit from. The overall health of the ecosystem will greatly improve with a well-established bear population.
To appreciate, we must share
Under a MDC program
To see bears in their natural environment.
So we can see more of them.
Because that is how it was before humans got involved
Because traditionally black bears were native to Missouri.
I feel the department will do a great job of managing the bear population and allowing hunters to hunt.

Black bears enrich the Missouri environment. The mission to conserve, protect, & enjoy now and for the future to come!
Maybe more than 500 but not above 100 for now
They are a natural population here, so I would like to see them successful and safely live in Missouri.
With the correct population it is a benefit
It will add to the diversity of the state wildlife
It should grow, but not to a level that it would become a problem with urban interaction.
I feel the more we live in harmony with nature, humankind benefits.
I would like to see them continue to spread around the state.
Because I enjoy seeing them and they're part of the natural world. Based on populations in other eastern states, Missouri should be able to support at least several thousand bears.
grow but not too point of being a nuisance
They're fascinating, beautiful creatures.
Happy to have native wildlife re-established until human/bear conflicts grow
until a manageable level
Black bears use to populate most of Missouri and I feel we need to allow them to get back to those range of numbers.
For same reason as in the first question and to keep wild places in Missouri wild.
With controls such as hunting
But understand it must be within reason to avoid human conflicts turning against the bears.
Until overpopulation occurs, black bears should be allowed to grow and thrive.
within reason. Want to manage bear/human ration so it doesn't get out of hand like the deer especially in urban areas
I wonder if the population could expand along the major rivers.
maintain a balanced, natural ecosystem
It is part of nature.
But manage their numbers through hunting.
It was once part of the ecosystem and should be allowed to repopulate.
Bring it back like whitetail
Because they were here before the white man
Because black bears represent a pre-contact environment in many rural areas in Missouri
grow until more human/bear problems
No hunting until population is near full and sustainable.
Beautiful, awesome, and natural!
They are not hurting anyone, they have every right to live their lives and raise their cubs that we have.
They are part of a healthy ecosystem.
TO HELP ELIMINATE DISEASED DEER AND CREATE THE PREDATOR BALANCE.
If human population can why not wildlife!?

Until overpopulation occurs, black bears should be allowed to grow and thrive.
There were only two options. If I answer No, there will be open house on bear skin rugs. Yes, I believe they should prosper, but not to their demise. Hoping that relocation will be in their future with no news channels to hear about the over population.
What gives us the right to decide that
500 is tiny. No species can healthfully sustain itself at that level. They need diversity in genes & to be ready for the awful climate change we're throwing at them. Please bring them up to 5000 or more. Thank you! PS Human activities (land development & some climate change effects already) have killed about 60% of all animals in the past 50 years. What a horrific statistic. And that rate is advancing. Please help humans stop dominating everything else and taking the whole planet down with us. :-)
Figure out a way for population control besides KILLING. I'm quite certain there are other options.
The Injustice of the Innocent & Voiceless! All animals deserve lives free from human-inflicted suffering. As the highest created being, humans have a moral obligation to be wise stewards of animals. Just because we happen to be the most powerful species on earth, we humans have the ability, but not the right, to abuse the so-called lower animals. The ends do NOT justify the means! We all know that there is something seriously wrong with a system where the best day of an animal's life is the day that it is finally over! Every Living Creature deserves the Right to Live as Nature has intended. Not only do animal victims deserve to be free from abuse and neglect, but numerous studies show a correlation between animal cruelty and violence toward people animal cruelty impacts community safety.
That is their natural right, and MDC's data is not convincing.
It is small, and self regulates based on available food sources and habitat.
Black bears are not a problem in Missouri.
This planet does not belong to humans. We must share it with all native species.
The population, by the state's estimates, are quite low--fewer than 1,000. The role of black bears as a top predator in area ecosystems has yet to be established, and that position is critical to the health of those ecosystems.
500 seems to be a minimal amount. If hunting seasons opens the population will cease to exist.
It's the nature of the beast, to breed and grow with the world around them.
An estimated 800 bears in the entire state is a very small percentage
Why not? They have a place here just like all the other Missouri wildlife.
Why do we have to play GOD just because we think there are too many bears? There are too many humans also! We can coexist peacefully!
500 isn't a solid base to count on in case of a disaster. Whether it is manmade or a natural one. It will take much longer to get back to 500 if something happens

Why do you think the black bear population should not be allowed to grow?

Bears are known to be a threat to human civilization, are known to attack human children and human adults, and Bears pose a significant risk to the motoring public. Stock keepers or ranchers do lose livestock to predation by bears.
What about conflict with people and domestic animals?
IT SHOULD NOT BE ANY LARGER THAN IT IS ALREADY.
Interaction with humans
do not want over population
See next two answers
I think limiting the population is a good idea so they don't over populate and cause damage example property, car accidents
I do not know how this animal (In large population) benefits our wilderness.
increases human/animal conflicts
Present MDC field staff is not properly capable to manage these large animals in all of the areas that they are habituating.
Would they be a problem where people raise large numbers of chickens.
maintain
Too many would be dangerous to people & dogs.
They are pretty safe-just make messes.
No Opinion
No natural predators, population management is important
I believe the population is to a huntable size currently based off of first hand sightings and game camera pictures in the last 2 years.
I like the idea of not being afraid when I am walking around in the woods
Need balance and control.
Don't want in my backyard
Too many possibilities of human encounters
Danger to hikers, campers, people in general.
I think 800-850 is plenty for MO with the amount of forest we have
unknown...only concern is for domesticated family pets if bears get into populated areas
look at all the deer-vehicle problems and now I have to be concerned with human-bear conflict; not before.
Not unlimited--will threaten themselves and people.
not much more than it is now.
fear of conflict
Not Sure. They can grow to a size that doesn't severely impact bears and people. Is 500 an optimal number
I think we already have the amount we need.
Just another wildlife nuisance to deal with.

Not if the encroach on cities
too much contact
populations need to be managed so as to provide safety for all
camping experience-scary-dangerous
enough already
population should remain at a self-sustaining level, not risking increased frequency of human-bear conflicts.
concern with black bears moving into urban and suburban areas, with consequently increasing interaction with humans
Safety
To try and keep the bear population from being in highly populated areas.
I think the goal of 550 bears is good.
Why do you have concerns with the range of black bears expanding geographically in Missouri?
Bears are known to be a threat to human civilization, are known to attack human children and human adults, and Bears pose a significant risk to the motoring public.
Stock keepers or ranchers do loose livestock to predation by bears.
Bears might eat ranchers out of house and home...
And, Bears "might attack or kill us" because they are hungry, to defend territory that is no longer ours... but now belongs to the Bears...or simply because they can.
Livestock
Urban areas increase risk of people creating more adverse interactions.
If they stay to their nature setting for their safety and human safety.
THEY WILL MOVE INTO MORE RESIDENTIAL AREAS
IF IN DENSELY POPULATED AREAS
Only because I hate to see them get hit by a car like that on on I-44 last year
would like to see more
I am only concerned about them moving into the city and populated areas where they'll become a nuisance.
Unfortunately, humans don't always use common sense when it comes to bears and I don't want to see negative interactions bears and people ie feeding bears
It seems that Missourians are having front the cost of living this this animal with no benefit.
For their safety I wouldn't think you would want them in populated areas
If it expands above (or to areas) the cultural carrying capacity it can be controlled by hunting (preferred) trapping or culling.
very populated areas
I'm concerned about Carter Co. neighbors have sited them
Because there is no firm management plan in place to manage the present population, and the population numbers are vague at best.
With no natural predators hunting and traffic are going to be primary population control.

Within limits, minimal conflict with humans being important.
Conflicts
I live in a forest.
Into urban areas
I don't want it to become too much of a problem for my huge garden
afraid of encounters
Human Stupidity
Around populated cities where they could get in lots of trouble or hit by cars.
"see above" - too many possibilities of human encounters
Many people don't understand they are wild animals and feed them
(Rural - Yes, Urban - No) Humans in urban cities cannot co-exist with such a large wild mammal
Metro areas and overall safety of humans and pets.
expanding into a very urban area could more likely result in increased opposition to their presence in any part of the state.
Without a program such as ours, it could be dangerous
Not all
might be an issue in highly populated areas.
must protect the bears.
problems with uninformed people
for my family dog and to be safe when I hike trails
danger to humans and property
safety of people
deer population is an example of animal populations growing seemingly with minimal control and creating interface problems.
concerned with movement of bear population into areas with concentrated human populations (ie. suburbs, possibly urban areas)
small concern because of children, pets and generally because bird feeders, trash, etc. but I do like the idea of seeing black bears in MO.
fear of conflict
My concerns are related to the bear's safety, as people who are fearful or uneducated might harm or kill bears, especially if they're not used to seeing bears
just encounters with humans in cities
More human bear interaction
Could add to human conflict.
Missouri should keep track of all large animals in state
We want them in the wild and not in the city.
People are stupid and will leave garbage outside their houses and bird feeders. Also many neighbors have chickens and fruit trees.

Of course, I live close to Ballwin
Just another wildlife to deal with.
Expanding to cities and towns will be an issue.
I live at the SW corner of 141 and 44 above where the Drury hotel is--Wildlife has nowhere to go and ends up in my yard--coyote, 10-12 deer, coons-you name it and I am afraid of bears.
Bad press would harm expansion
Highways
I do not want bears to hurt themselves or humans. MDC needs to monitor population, which I believe they will.
Coming into contact with residential areas
see above (camping experience-scary-dangerous)
they would want their own space
Because of the urban/nature conflict - with education we can coexist but it will take some time to educate the urban population to gain respect for the bear population
human/bear conflicts
Mostly because of children with limited awareness
I don't want them on my property. I have young kids and live on 100 acres.
IDIOT HUMANS WILL TRY TO GET SELFIES ETC.
Into public areas because bears (wildlife always) lose
Yes. People with semi-automatic weapons will have a field day . Now that we have "sleeping bear" killing allowed, they will find themselves in harm's way. Relocation could be their only salvation.
I don't think we need them in urban areas.
Interaction with stupid humans!

Why do you support having a highly regulated, limited hunting season?

I trust the MDC to manage bears the same way other large mammals are.
TO CONTROL THE POPULATION LIKE THE DEER POPULATION
I LIKE BEAR HUNTING
TO CONTROL NUMBERS
HUNTIN IS A WELL-ESTABLISHED MANAGEMENT TOOL AND SERVES TO SEPARATE HUMANS AND BEARS TO SOME DEGREE, RESULTING IN LESS NEGATIVE INTERACTIONS
WE ALL NEED TO GET ALONG
BECAUSE I FEEL WERE ALREADY OVERPOPULATED
IN ORDER TO REGULATE NUMBERS
Good rules for hunting.
KEEP POPULATION APPROPRIATE FOR ENVIRONMENT
MANAGE THE POPULATION
Only when it becomes a large population - larger than 500+.
Best way to manage their populations.

TO MANAGE POPULATION
Numbers need controlled for a healthy population.
would like to bear hunt
Population control as necessary
They have no natural predators
It would be a good way to keep the population from getting out of hand and people would enjoy it.
Hunters and hunting is the best way to keep a good population
while I do not desire to hunt bear myself I feel that it could bring money into the state.
would like to see the bears not in the city.
public safety
I support the season to manage the population because if not, the total numbers of bear could get too high, so it would be best to start early in the process
I am a hunter and I enjoy hunting bears in order to help maintain a specific amount of bears in a region
It has proven to be an excellent tool for management.
Hunting is a crucial part of conservation of all species.
It is a good way to control population and range.
Would not want over population due to disease, starvation, conflict (death) with humans.
It is better to manage than to have land owners shoot the bear
In order to keep the population in check.
I'm a hunter
neutral on this - I'm not a hunter but those who are may want the opportunity and it could help control the population
To manage the human-bear conflicts
The meat is good (similar to ham), it is the most economical means to control population expansion, and gives hunters another opportunity to get outdoors.
hunting helps manage wildlife populations and keeps the population under control
Good way to control overpopulation
when the MDC determines the time is right
helps control population
I enjoy hunting
Open opportunity to more closely manage populations/learn more about
It is a great conservation tool for recreation and population monitoring
If necessary to thin out the bear population, the MO Conservation will handle it professionally.
To control overpopulation.
Well, for starters, I'm a hunter. But also because I believe in the North American model of wildlife management, which involves the people in the management of wildlife instead of concentrating it in the hands of professional hired guns.
control animal numbers

Control population
Is the meat safe? I heard it is like pork.
Because all wild animals must be managed and North America Model for wild hunting is the best tool for population control.
The population needs to be managed to minimize human conflicts
To prevent over-population and natural habitat
Management is the key to sustainability of the population.
To keep number in check
Keep population under control
I would like to try hunting bears here and it would be an increased opportunity for other hunters
Keep numbers in check
hunting has proven to be the most cost-effective management tool in most areas, for most wildlife
For our children
hunting and trapping are the best ways to control populations
Increased availability of funds, management opportunities and multiple benefits of hunting
Too many will starve to death
Cheap way to manage a population.
some will desire to have opportunity for a take; keep management in check
You will do what you like
That's conservation and allows opportunities to get outdoors and create memories
Best way to manage population
Because regulated hunting season provide opportunities to be outdoors in the harbor to game animals to eat it also keeps the numbers in check, so they do not over populate.
Because hunting is the best method to control a population.
You cannot regulate a population of any wildlife without hunting and/or trapping.
Wildlife management is important. No natural predators
if not harvested the population will begin to cause problems in the Ozarks
opportunity to expand hunting experiences
Hunting is a great tool to provide funding for wildlife management and its a great source of fun, food, and a way to experience the natural world.
Helps manage population
To keep things on the up and up
Give people a chance to do something once and a lifetime
It will help keep them in check and keep an element of fear in them of people.
You all are the professionals. I guess it depends on how regulated.
Controlled and regulated hunting has been proven to be the best way to manage wildlife populations.
Cull them but allow growth
It would be awesome to harvest a Missouri black bear for the first time in my life

A bear tag would be my dream hunt. If the population isn't hunted and controlled human bear conflicts will start to become frequent.
No comment
All hunting seasons of all animals in Missouri are highly regulated and it works well. No trapping though of any animals.
Because having a hunting season for bears means that MDC has successfully managed the population!
Hunting is the best management method. It provides hunting opportunities, revenue and the it's the most effective way to manage numbers.
Should be monitored and managed
I'd Like to have part family to hunt
Hunting is the best way to control the bear population too many bears would generate many problems.
Wildlife management is necessary
Need to control bear population.
Keep them from being a problem.
Only way to control population growth
Wildlife officers understand what the state of Missouri can handle. As long as the number of tags are kept at a minimum, I will say support.
Bear population must be regulated to avoid overpopulation of bears and conflicts with humans and/or dogs.
Could help control nuisance bears
conservation and population management
conservation is key to the successful management.
Control
They should be managed as any other game species.
Most control to some self defense
Humans have altered the natural ecosystem beyond it's ability to keep a balanced carrying capacity.
To control the population
managed hunts can provide a way to maintain a healthy, sustainable population within the carrying capacity of a given region.
population control
as a population management tool. I know some hunters would be very excited for the opportunity.
I'll be much more educated on bears! Habitats, desires, habits, etc.
To many bears will cause bear and people conflict.
See answer to black bear population growth question. Hunting seasons are one way of managing the population.
I would support hunting if the benchmark was raised to more than 500
One of the benefits of a strong population is being able to manage
"see above" - still mostly south for now (answer to why no concerns)
I think it is the only way to control the populations

So, we don't kill them off
to control the population
manage numbers
Population control
safety of people
we are to be good stewards of our environment
Common sense
Sounds good.
I am a non-hunter, but population will eventually have to be controlled.
to keep numbers under control
it's the only way to regulate the population
I am an avid hunter
I would support a hunting season once black bears become so common you are highly likely to see a bear in the wild
I support science-based management by MDC and hope the public will support the MDC decisions as well.
Unknown. I need more information but trust MDC!
to keep from seeing bears.
It will need to be regulated
maintain a balance
unfortunately, our ecosystem isn't balanced enough for natural regulation, so hunting is an effective way to help manage that plus, hunting will generate revenue to go to protect our natural landscape animals
that seems more humane than forcing bears to forage for human food.
I'm not a hunter but I can see the need to control the population
Because people have a right to hunt sustainable populations
The me would approve but to ultimately saves them I believe? Has to be highly regulated.
for the same reason as we have deer hunting.
Population control to limit human interaction
brings in revenue for the state and good way to manage the populations
the population mechanisms are askew. need to keep all populations in check (including our own)
Over population would lead to trouble.
it is good for the rest of nature and could bring Missouri a lot of money because of permits.
It is the most natural way to maintain the population.
It's worked for conservation for years. Why not? I trust you all.
If well-regulated with an aggressive education effort.
While you are at it the deer herds in St. Louis county
Hunting is conservation, and a responsibility of humans to manage our environment
I grew up in New Jersey. A managed hunt helped curb human/bear conflicts there.

Once we have a sustainable base of black bears and in a limited offering to start.... also, there should be HEAVY FINES for poaching of any bears.
There has to be a way of keeping the population in check.
Necessary or at least a very good way to control population.
I think it will help. Bear are fascinating to watch, but I don't want over population like the deer.
I support limited hunting opportunities as part of an overall management plan but feel that the threshold of 500 bears is far too low to begin implementing hunting opportunities. I would like to see the population at least reach 1500, and possibly higher before hunting is implemented.
Unmanaged would be disastrous to both bears and humans.
Best way to manage program
I would very much like to participate in a hunt. Also, it would need to be both regulated and limited in order for the population to remain healthy and continue to grow.
Keep the bears healthy with adequate food supply.
If necessary - would support if MDC and other bear experts deem it necessary
For those that hunting is a sport- Use to control population.
Too many bears are unhealthy
It scatters the DNA and breeding population grows healthier.
why not
best approach
Because everything MDC has done works! (fish, introducing elk...etc.)
I'm a hunter and I would love to be able to hunt black bears.
but hunters must be educated
MDC know/monitors the population and I am confident they will do what is BEST!
People need plans to manage their environment. Nature takes care of the animals. People can't follow natural laws.
MDC has done a good job with other game with the expectation of hogs not sure who can stop them
It is an effective way to control population
Hunting is a viable population control method.
no over population
It would add to the constituency supporting bears and probably keep a healthy fear of humans.
Hunting will check population growth that will be a growing need with growing human/bear conflict
That's how you manage out resources
crowded
reduce human-bear conflict
Hunting is an integral part of conservation - wise use of resources (not to be confused with protection).
Proper, legal hunting contributes to conservation efforts and the animal population overall.
Because we need to keep the bear population within a manageable amount

I am not opposed to a highly regulated limited hunting season, but I question if we have reached an adequate bear population.
Use of science-based research to manage the resource.
without regulating bear population, it may increase to a level that bear/human interaction would be detrimental
I support MDC and also support hunting.
Hunting is best management method to stabilize population.
I support MDC managing the bear population by whatever means they feel is best for the bears.
Wildlife populations should be managed so they do not suffer due to lack of natural food or disease.
Management is key
Great source of protein. Were historically hunted for 100's of years. Need to keep population down to avoid conflict.
over population of bears could be a problem
Do not think the population is large enough yet to hunt
Only and only when population is near or at peak and is sustainable.
To keep a health population of bears and keep people from accusing bears of causing problems.
To keep the populate from effecting the more populated, urban areas.
I believe the bear population needs to be kept in check.
To control interaction with stupid humans. I hope the state is drawing information from other wildlife areas in controlling the population. Also, should have massive fines for poachers.
We wouldn't want them to get over populated.
No one should be allowed to kill as many as they want. All hunting should be regulated!
Because there needs to be a balance since we humans are taking away the environment that they live in. I don't see humans giving up where they live so the environment can be a better place

Why do you oppose having a highly regulated, limited hunting season?

Bears are known to be a threat to human civilization, are known to attack human children and human adults, and Bears pose a significant risk to the motoring public. Stock keepers or ranchers do loose livestock to predation by bears.
Bears might eat ranchers out of house and home... And, Bears "might attack or kill us" because they are hungry, to defend territory that is no longer ours... but now belongs to the Bears... or simply because they can.
"Shoot Bears on Sight" as a dangerous and invasive species.
PERSONAL BELIEF AGAINST KILLING
I feel this will encourage poaching.
I feel that it will encourage poaching.
I would be very opposed to bait hunting.

We hate killing things.
I can't imagine that many bears
Why would you want to kill them?
Once allowed to start hunting it draws a very possible chance of the population dwindling again.
I hate hunting! Even though I wouldn't be doing the hunting. I know, I sound unreasonable.
WE SIMPLY DON'T NEED TO OPEN UP TO TROPHY HUNTERS! WE ALL KNOW THAT INDIVIDUALS WILL GO FOR THE BIGGEST BEAR, NOT THE PROBLE BEARS, CITIZENS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED, IF ANYTHING IT SHOULD BE MANAGED BY CONSERVATION EMPLOYEES ONLY!
bears don't have guns. not fair. make humans hunt with their hands.
Trophy hunting is unnecessary for population control. Black bears regulate their own populations based on food availability. For example, if a pregnant mother bear doesn't have enough body fat by the time she enters the den, her body will reabsorb her embryos and she will not give birth. Female bears don't reproduce until they're about three to five years old. A female will only produce a litter of about three cubs every other year and most of those cubs will not survive to their first year. Kill rates from trophy hunting exceed naturally-occurring mortalities, because trophy hunters kill adult breeding animals, which disrupts animals' societies and leads to even more deaths in their communities. For instance, once a big male bear is killed, incoming subadult male bears will try to kill the former males' offspring.
There should be NO hunting season. There are better, more humane ways to management wildlife than to allow hunting. Do the hunters eat the meat or use the fur to provide clothing to their families? I think not.
I don't feel the population is high enough in numbers
Because these are God's animals and we should love them as part of the creation.
Unless it's dangerously large, I think we should leave them alone.
I think there should be no hunting at all.
Would support if it was not highly regulated. Thus, costing more for tags etc....
I don't believe there is any level of adequate population to allow hunting until the animal has been restored to their historical levels.
Because studies show it would have adverse effects on the overall population
Don't believe in hunting
I love animals/ besides human beings screw up everything.
We just brought them into Missouri, why kill them?
use contraception if possible. tired of billing as management control
Because you can hardly police the policies you have now on hunting. I don't believe you could adequately control it and poaching and fear killing is going to be an issue.
I will oppose the hunt at this time but look forward to seeing how mdc will regulate bear and elk hunts.
Management with professional, licensed, regulated control methods.
Ideally the populations of different species should balance each other out without human intervention
I do not believe the numbers in this plan to be credible and there have been no dangerous encounters.
managing wildlife is an insane concept. they can manage themselves without human intervention.

Deal with human-bear conflicts and nuisance bears first.
I do not believe the population is established enough for a hunting season. Determine the maximum holding capacity for our state. One we surpass it then open up a limited hunting season. I'm no researcher but only 500 bears seem to small of a population to open a hunting season. At most you would issue 100 permits... so not everyone would even get a chance to hunt them like deer.
think there should be more of them
I just don't think the population is at this level yet.
At this point bear population in MO does not warrant hunting. Perhaps I'll feel different if bear population greatly increases.
Don't see a need unless they become overpopulated
Mortality rates coming from nuisance bears and car accidents will help regulate the population substantially enough to where hunting will be excessive.
I'm not ready to endorse this decision
I understand that hunting permits bring revenue to MDC, but I am opposed to shooting/killing wildlife that is not used as food.
Hunting should only be allowed when overpopulation becomes a problem.
Strongly oppose. Stop killing the animals!!
It's inhumane and these animals suffer when they are shot. It's not like they just magically lay down and die. It's a horrible and painful way to die. Why would we do that to another being?
I guess you have to hunt but would rather not see bears hunted.
QUIT KILLING WILDLIFE...FOR MONEY.
Hunting should only be allowed when overpopulation becomes a problem.
Relocation is my only option.
Because they should only be hunted if over populated
There is only yes or no allowed on this answer, which ignores all possible nuance. If the number exceeds 5000 healthy bears in MO alone & they start killing more than 3 humans a year in MO alone, you can have some highly regulated hunting, for example.
Stop the KILLING as a solution, it's deplorable.
These bears are not necessarily dangerous, they are just looking for food. Humans have overdeveloped the land and forced ALL animals to seek food outside of their normal habitat!!
Since MDC's data is unconvincing, this sounds like an opportunity for trophy hunters to come from other states to hunt the bears, not to actually keep the population of black bears to a "safe" amount.
No need for it.
The data is not convincing. It appears this is more likely for attracting trophy hunters from out of state.
Hunting is inhumane and unjustifiable.
To repeat my "additional comments" on this topic: There are two problems with specifying hunting as the management tool of choice: First, it is in conflict with natural population regulatory processes that would reduce numbers through mortality of old, sick, injured, or very young bears, thus maintaining a strong gene pool. Hunters, to the extent that they

discriminate at all among potential victims, would draw to those bears that would make more impressive trophies, i.e., the largest and healthiest bears--the very ones that should be retained in the population. Second, the use of hunting creates incentives to increase the numbers of bears hunted to satisfy demands of hunters (some of whom would come from out of state for a chance at trophies) and to increase revenue for the state through hunting permits. There should be no incentives in place that would corrupt--as they certainly would--the "science-based" management of bears.
People will find ways around the supposed highly regulated limited season.
The bear just like the business have been hunted, harvested, abused almost into extinction.
Bears are not over populated
I am absolutely opposed to allowing bear hunting in Missouri. To my knowledge, bears are not a problem here, and your data seems vague at best. This seems more like an effort to attract out of state trophy hunters rather than conserve Missouri's environment.

Additional comments regarding black bear research and management

Don't know
I HAVE NO CONCERNS WITH THE RANGE EXPANDING AS I BELIEVE MDC WILL MANAGE
NOT INTERESTED IN HUNTING BEAR IN MISSOURI AT THIS POINT
NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT HARVESTING A BEAR. IS IT AS GOOD AS DEER?
Bears are being more & more common in Missouri.
Maybe interested in harvesting a black bear.
Only by camera
NOT IMPORTANT TO ME BUT COULD BE A GREAT WAY TO INCREASE INCOME AND CONSERVATION FUNDING.
DON'T UNDERSTAND THE HUMAN DIMENSION PIECE
I agree with harvest but have no interest in doing so myself.
As long as habitat supports bear populations we should not dictate ranges.
they need to see them (regarding question about black bears expanding geographically)
They clearly have no real function in the ecology.
I would rather just enjoy seeing them in the wild.
Let's see what happens (regarding black bears expanding geographically)
I am not a hunter.
maybe interested in harvesting a black bear
If the population is thinner statewide, there will be less competition between bears, and I would think also less interactions with people
They're too condensed currently.
I think it is the normal process for the bears to expand
I am a bear hunter. I have hunted bears in several states. I love bears and bear country from swamps in Maine to the Idaho mountains. If numbers support it in my home state it would be an honor to participate. I admire the bear and what it stands for.

I'm not concerned. I think you have a management plan. (regarding black bears expanding geographically)
harvesting meaning what? eating it?
We have plenty of habitat. (regarding range of black bears)
Only if they begin to conflict with populations. Not occasional farm problems. (regarding range of black bears expanding)
I hunt with a camera. Live and let live kind of person
Probably would have to have my son do it; I'm not a very good shot.
would be more than we could eat
Not particularly; like Havilah Babcock in "I Don't Want to Shoot an Elephant", bobwhite quail (now deer, turkey and waterfowl) give me all the excitement and satisfaction I can stand!
I hear the meat is quite good. I'm not concerned with black bear expansion as long as bear/human conflicts are not out of control (i.e. endangering human life)
The bears are adjusting most likely make up for displacement for opportunity.
Response to expansion question (I know and have confidence my MO conservation team keep a close watch.
Additional comments (I doubt I would be able, but my son, a deputy, and my 25 year old grandson would be interested. Only if it is necessary to thin out the population to manage the bears.
The agricultural industry should be on the ground floor of this management program, not ignored. Bear damage should be fully compensated to the agricultural producer. The citizen who owns property and pays taxes, pays for many of the public programs, not the bears.
PLEASE DON'T OPEN UP TROPHY SEASON ON BLACK BEARS!!!!
A black bear hunt is a terrible idea. Please give these beautiful carnivores a chance to recover and expand.
Again, I want to voice my support for MDC resource managers, and encourage you to stay on your present course in spite of the vocal and emotional opposition you will almost certainly encounter on the hunting issue. Thank you for the work you do. I know it can be a thankless job at times. Although I would absolutely love to see more bears in the state, and see a hunting season, I do feel priority should be given to some of our existing keystone species -- especially turkeys. I'm a brood survey volunteer, and I can tell you turkeys are not doing well in Missouri right now. I believe MDC biologist Jason Isabelle has requested funding for research into possible causes of the wild turkey decline. I sincerely hope MDC would prioritize funding Jason to do that research before spending money to increase the bear population. After our deer (CWD, etc.) and turkey are well cared-for, then (and only then) do I believe we should be investing in bears.
I'm not sure what you mean by "harvesting" a black bear.
I like beef and chicken more than other meat.
If done in a way other than shooting one over bait (barrel full of donuts)
Enjoy our wildlife
We have a video from 7/2/19 we will send you.

Geographic expansion - MDC is keeping them under control. Undecided about hunting season, but probably a good idea.
Just love seeing them.
Free land owner tags
I don't know about killing a bear; I don't oppose it, I just don't know if I need to.
I am not a hunter. I am a landowner and would love my grandgirls to have the opportunity.
I would love to have a rug in my cabin.
Geographic expansion: the more the merrier
I don't hunt
geographic expansion: I believe expansion of the population to be a good thing.
I think we should trap them like Mane
Please use science-based research to determine the practical use of hunting bears in Missouri. Don't give in to Yellowstone syndrome.
All good
Would like for it to be a point-based season, where the more points the better chance, not like managed deer hunts where you get more names in the hat.
No, thanks for all you do.
Absolute no to a black bear hunting season.
Let them grow
Please consider NOT having a black bear hunt.
Black bears are delicious and super cool! Bring the numbers up!
Keep up the good work MDC
If they can expand to other areas then we would know no one is killing them.
As long as managed for safe human contact.
I have hunting black bears in Canada x4 and have several full mounts.
Shouldn't be for sport.
Bear hunting is good, but because of my age (81) I couldn't hunt.
Maybe
I love seeing native species in MO. Not clear what you mean by "grow". I think we must be responsible for managing them, since we reintroduced them. I don't hunt
I see no reason for concern.
Human conflict issues are concerning. I'd like the opportunity to hunt. Not sure I would be a regular or lifetime hunter of black bears.
Please do not allow baiting!
It would take a lot of woodsmanship to use a traditional bow.
No concerns because I believe that proactive communication education and management programs will allow for greater benefits than risks.
I don't know where they are now. I wouldn't want them to start going into residential areas.

Resources should be more widely available for land and homeowners about general bear info - how to be safe in their bear contact. help the public understand bears life cycle and when MDC relocates a bear, please advise local community.
I have not decided about harvesting a black bear. I would enjoy better chances of photographing a few
An opportunity to be able to harvest a native Missouri black bear would be rewarding
Not sure what harvesting means
current level is enough, and the range of the bears are expanding.
No more crazies with bigger guns running around in the woods. The only way I support bear killing is if it is done in controlled manner by MDC employees and meat and hides donated to food banks and wherever the hides can be best used nonprofit.
Don't know what harvesting means, but I live in a small condo in Kirkwood. Would I be harvesting in my guest bedroom?
May be hunting one someday
need bear in MO but need to harvest for numbers only.
as long as its managed.
But see bear hunting as something hunters in Mo would like
there are many areas in MO that could support bears.
as long as we are all bear aware. thanks!
again, they are a native species that historically occupied all of the state.
I'm sure there is plenty of space/habitat for bears
"hunting" if that is this then me personally no. understand may be need for it.
so long as they are nonthreatening, and people are educated I don't feel a reason to be concerned.
thanks for hosting things like tonight. opinion on population growing depends on how it is managed.
this is more about recreation then conservation and would be a mis-use of the tax payer dollars that fund this agency.
Let nature be at peace - promote peace with nature and focus on how we can get along with them - instead of managing them. This lecture was not informative with a human intent - but to promote killing innocent wildlife. Beyond sad!
I would love to share my ground with bears. I understand trash and feed.
Do I get to hit bears with my car as well as deer? Do I get to confront bears on bicycle trails?
They have a really cool skull, but not so cool I need one on my desk.
Not like Teddy Roosevelt (president) I have to much respect for bears
Don't like the term "harvesting"-- These are sentient, intelligent mammals not pumpkins, don't sugarcoat hunting (I don't oppose hunting for food, as with deer, but trophy hunters are just ego, machismo, bragging rights etc.--not cool!!
I have a few relatives who may be interested.
Require humans to remove attractants before hunting bears!
archery
I don't hunt but my husband and son and grandsons all hunt.

Would you be interested in harvesting a black bear? Answered no - but perhaps for hunters.
Only for food not for sport
Continue educating the public on how to behave in bear country. Educate the importance of having a keystone species in our state.
Absolutely, have eaten bear from out west would love to harvest my own.
I hunted in Canada and harvested one. Thant was enough for me. My son might.
I would rather photograph bears
It would be really cool to harvest a black bear.
I am not interested in harvesting a black bear but feel hunters should have the opportunity.
Harvested black bears should not be wasted! The privilege to harvest should profit the local economy & MDC. Harvesting should be strictly controlled, monitored, & recorded. No "baiting" bears permitted. Heavy fines for violators!!
I would like to understand more before hunting a bear. Will the meat be good? Will baiting be allowed? As I'm not typically a fan of baiting.
Predators are a key to our ecosystem and natural selection takes care of the numbers enough with better animals available to harvest.
So happy that is majestic animal has made a comeback.
I have issues with people wanting to hunt bears, or anything else for that matter. I'm not a hunter myself.
I think or wonder if the department could increase social tolerance with greater public education to further minimize human/bear conflicts.
I would but might be just as interested to shoot with my camera.
not at this time
How was the hunting threshold of 500 established?
Increase amount of bear habitat.
WHO SUPPORTS YOU???? HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU GET TO LET THEM HUNT THE BEAR????
Been there
Good LORD. No harvesting. This will get completely out of control. Relocation.
I have eaten bear meat and it's not so good.
Massive fines for poachers!
NO KILLING..... Work harder, figure out better solutions to the problem than the easy and disgusting way of hunting and killing animals.
Have some compassion for wildlife; they have it bad enough with their land being poached, global warming, and hunter's egos. We do NOT need out-of-state hunters either!!!!
Leave them alone.
Let the black bears be.
Please do not implement hunting of black bears!!!

Managing Human-Bear Conflict

Have you experienced damage or nuisance activity from a bear?

Trash
Bird feeder
Camping
Bird feeder, Deer feeder, Other
Other
Trash
Bird feeder
Camping
Deer feeder
Deer feeder
Other
Deer feeder
Livestock
Deer feeder
Other
Deer feeder
Bee hives, Camping
Deer feeder
Bird feeder, Trash
Trash
Deer feeder
Trash
Trash, Other
Camping
Trash, Camping
Bird feeder, Deer feeder
Bird feeder
Camping
Trash
Deer feeder
Camping
Camping
Bird feeder
Camping
Bee hives
Bird feeder, Other

Livestock, Camping
Bee hives

Have you experienced damage or nuisance activity from a bear? (other)

Fruit trees
Ice house
Fence-privacy wood board ripped off
Black Berry Patch
BBQ sauce on picnic grates

Please provide details of damage or nuisance activity that you experienced from a black bear

In can.
Maybe our bird seed container. We assumed it was a raccoon but now we're not sure.
FARM IN DOUGLAS COUNTY, FREQUENTLY ON TRAIL CAMERA
They dump our trash and drag it all over.
Empty stored food in summer
Bears in campgrounds in Canada and Wyoming.
2017 at campsite try to get through privacy fence.
Bear #1014 between Hwy 76 and AM Hwy, tore down deer feeder on private property. Captured on game cam.
took over feeder and chased deer away
In Pennsylvania
Bees in another state. Ohio and PA
It was a plastic deer feeder. We built steel feeders, no problem now.
When I was young, I lived in State College, Pennsylvania. Occasionally bears would wander into town to go through trash cans. When that happened, citizens were warned and removed all possible trash from their yards.
In Smokey Mountains picnic area
Tore up cooler left outside.
Washington co, MO bird feeder chewed in half and iron stand bent.
Several years ago at a forest camp ground off of highway 21 the camp host forgot to tell us about bears. They ate my bananas on the table.
Destroyed 1/8 plate steel and fold like paper to get in trash
Had one break a PVC feeder in half and it had claw marks running the length (6 ft)
Not related to Missouri. When backpacking in New Mexico a bear knocked down my tent while sleeping (attempting to sleep)
destroyed camp site scared kids and me and wife
General wreckage of the bird feeder, as in total destruction, far beyond the capability of raccoons.
I lived outside Winter Park, Colorado. Bears were common, and people were stupid.

My electric fence stopped working. Bear came, and I realized my fence was broken. Fixed fence, bear gone.
One got in my car because I left food in there though I knew they were around.
They ate the brood

Why wouldn't you remove your bird feeder to stop feeding a bear?

I WANT TO WATCH THEM
But I would remove them in the late afternoon and put them out in the morning.
Love watching them.
I like birds
I would place the bird feeder in a location that the bear couldn't get to in an effort to discourage the bear.
Want to see one & that would be "close up!"
I might change them to a better design, but I love to watch the birds.
Wouldn't bother me unless the bear was a problem
I put the feeder out for sustainability of other wildlife I don't agree that should be stopped due to bear signs
I would make my feeders bear proof.
I'd look for ways to keep the bears out.
All animals need to eat
Birds need food in winter. Would take measures so bears can't get to feeders.
I want to attract them
I would want to kill the bear, not alter my lifestyle.
I would stay inside and enjoy the site and take photos.
Now you want me to change my lifestyle
enjoy watching hummingbirds at feeders
Birds are important also
Because bears are not the problem - people are! I would bring feeders in at night - monitor feeders during the day.
Birds are nowhere the nuisance or threat that bears, coyotes, and deer are.
I like bears people not so much
It's for the birds, not the bears.
would move them higher or place on a pole they couldn't climb
Would make it more difficult for bears to reach.
I would not because if he isn't threatening me its not a problem.
We would explore ways of maintaining our feeders with the bears.
Because I like the birds
I like the birds
Because Bears need food too. Just like the squirrels raid my birdfeeders already. No different.

Not a strong enough reason to.
I would move them, so we could coexist.

Why wouldn't you try to modify your trash management to stop feeding a bear?

It's not up to me. It's up to the Trash Mgmt company
time to hunt
I would look through the laws/rules to see if I can legally and humanly kill it because if it's in my neighborhood the population is already to high in the woods and thats pushing the bears to rural communities. And killing the bear could save lives.
This would be inconvenient for farmers.
can place trash out the morning of pick up but I am required to use trash hauler waste container which is not a secure container
same as above - now you want me to change my lifestyle
I already do most of what you suggest. Bears are a threat.
We have a contracted service in Webster Groves. We would hope a new strengthened container would be made available.

Additional Human-Black Bear Conflict Comments

Bears are known to be a threat to human civilization, are known to attack human children and human adults, and Bears pose a significant risk to the motoring public. Stock keepers or ranchers do loose livestock to predation by bears.
Bears might eat ranchers out of house and home... And, Bears "might attack or kill us" because they are hungry, to defend territory that is no longer ours... but now belongs to the Bears...or simply because they can.
Our present habitat will no longer support both bears and humans. Which do we prefer to have, Bears or Humans?
THE FOOD WOULD ONLY ENCOURAGE ANOTHER VISIT
DON'T FEED THE BEARS
I think it's fantastic. (Comment is in regard to expansion of black bears to other parts of Missouri)
I would love to get involved if at all possible.
we have it doesn't help all the time
to keep the bear safe (regarding bird feeders and trash responses)
It's the right thing to do!
We already do this with coons (along with using DP traps)
encourage animals to move on if there are conflicts
I was at a MDC presentation for kids (not specifically) and when asked about bears - basically no constructive advice was given regarding "encounters." I hope there are more serious educational efforts with inexperienced young hunters and kids living in bear habitat.

All of your suggestions require either additional time and effort or expense. What about those who have neither?
i would like to know who had the black bear put to death in Joplin Mo. on July 12, 2019 and why someone did not check with animal rights org. before quickly having put down, the explanation for their putting the bear to death was weak at best.
I want to know why a black bear was killed in jasper county by authorities instead of being relocated as it should have been!
Please do not allow bear hunting in MO.
Hunting does not reduce conflicts. Studying whether hunting bears would result in fewer human-bear conflicts, many peer-reviewed, published researchers found no evidence of a connected relationship between hunting a bear population and human safety. Availability of human food is often the root cause of most negative human-bear interactions, but trophy hunters generally remove non-problem bears from the population, and often attempt to target large, male bears to acquire an impressive trophy.
Generally, bird feeders aren't necessary for the bird's survival.
If a bear was visiting a bird feeder I would move the feeder or put up electric fence around feeder.
Have been working with Conservation Department past 3 years on trapping bears on my property and enjoy doing it
Have bee hives. Have had other people in bee club be raided & destroyed hives, but not me.
Have seen one in my yard, travelling through.
move bird feeders away from house to keep bears away from the house
Carried bird feeders off
If bear kill or harm domestic animals or farm stock and especially bee hives the over seer and or farmers have right to illuminate immediately especially bee and farm animals
I'm not sure about in Missouri but out west, many human-predator conflicts result in death to the animal. I'd like to see a tracking collar placed on the individuals that are involved in conflicts (when trapping said animal is possible) so as to give the offender a second chance before its killed. For instance, a bear that killed livestock would be trapped, fitted with a radio collar, and relocated. Obviously, this would only work if you could guarantee you caught the right bear.
Provide ways to get rid of nuisance bears through the department
Not an issue for us.
No bears yet.
Many years of visiting our National Parks-Glacier and Yellowstone primarily also Denali. I know the problems facing human/bear encounters. A fed bear is a dead bear.
I'd like not to but think it would be hard to keep the bears out of bird feeders.
Where do we get the money to do all these things!!!
As long as it was feasible economically.
Live in condo with large dumpsters
Or get a secure bear proof refuse container.
I have lived in and visited many places that have well and poorly managed bear programs I firmly believe that bear managements can be successful.

what phone number would you call late at night or early morning for help with a bear. I have not seen any number posted.
such actions would be symptomatic of a bigger problem.
no problem thinks just got one male in area around St. Clair Mo, little Indians park
Reluctant to remove bird feeders (unless it is only temporary)
I have seen them camping but was not a nuisance.
People need to be managed - not wildlife. Agree with securing trash but will continue to feed other wildlife - i.e. birds.
At our weekend place there is a dumpster by the river. We have seen bears there because people do not pick up the trash that raccoons pull out of dumpsters or close the lids on the dumpsters.
I am not sure my city is so uptight about stuff then the extra cost I would have to endure is something I have to think about you have to pay for everything then lets not forget the tax
Make humans do their jobs to prevent human-bear issues
Need guidance on apiary management and bears. I have bee hives near Seaton, MO.
I would take measures to protect bears
Enjoy floating Meramec /Current Rivers/ want to be aware of recommended precautions for camping & floating.
Educating the public on living in bear country is key.
In high bear population areas could bear secure trash containers be available to the public?
I would hope MDC will give rural landowners the option to hunt nuisance bears on their property. My kids play outside a lot and I do not want them to encounter a bear
Humans are the ones who can mitigate it.
REMOVE THE HUMANS LEAVE THE BEAR ALONE. HUMANS ARE ALWAYS THE PROBLEM NOT THE ANIMAL.
Be sensible about situation. Most humans are inadequate about wildlife
No
I have a small farm with rabbits. I had a black bear eating the leftover food in the rabbit feeders. I started feeding them in the morning and removing the feeders at night. I never lost a chicken or rabbit to the bear. We have goats, dogs, cows, and cats outside also. The rabbit hutch was a little more secluded and away from the dogs. We saw the bear many times and never had a "conflict". We secure our trash and follow these other recommend practices like leaving doors shut. The bear has nothing in our yard to be interested in now and we rarely see it anymore except occasionally at the pond across the street not long after dark. Most "conflicts" are blown out of proportion like how someone will see a 2ft garter snake and swear under oath it was a 9ft boa. If homeowners take the right steps, they can live with them and never have issues. Of course, they should always stay alert and never lose respect for the potential of danger either. From my own experiences over the years with wildlife I just think most "dangerous conflicts" were actually human over exaggerated fear. We forget they are not coming into our yard, we built a home in theirs.
I oppose allowing bear hunting in Missouri. Missouri Dept. of Conservation's data and arguments are not persuasive. As such, the bear hunting regulation seems to be an effort to attract out of state trophy hunters rather than conserve Missouri's environment.

Educate the public.... let humans make changes... Don't KILL bears because we have taken their environment from them.
There is no need to kill the bears. This is just an excuse to kowtow to hunters.
Humans need to be more responsible to the environment that we have messed up

Be Bear Aware

From which sources do you now receive most of your information from MDC? (other)

Alaskan Natives, Wyoming Natives, Natives of South Carolina and several other states.
volunteer meetings
Signage in recreation areas
INTERNET
Private Land Manager
Discussion with MDC personnel
Pioneer newsletter
State sources
Friends in MDC
Conservation Federation of Missouri
Dept. of Ag
Volunteer at Powder Valley
cfm
I am a volunteer naturalist with Powder Valley and I am kept very informed about Missouri Bears.
river hills traveler
I am a volunteer
Facebook/Internet not MDC
Weekly report online
MDC naturalists
signs at national & local parks etc.
Groups

How would you prefer to get future additional information from MDC? (other)

PERSONAL INTERACTION
Conservationist.
TV SPECIAL REPORTS
NEWS
Printed matter
conservationist magazine
Missouri Conservationist
same as I get it now

NA Don't own a computer or Iphone
Conservationist Magazine
Newspaper/conservation magazine
News Paper / Conservationist
Magazine
Newspaper
Magazine
MDC publications
conservationist
conservationist
conservation magazine
conservationist
conservation magazine
Missouri Conservationist
Newspaper and Conservationist
Missouri Conservationist
MDC app like NHL app/ hockey app is very good model
Missouri Conservationist
All
Conservationist Magazine
Conservationist Magazine
signage in all locations where relevant
Groups

Additional comment regarding Be Bear Aware

BEARS DO BITE.... AND MAY CLAW.

A Typical Bear "attack mode" or method is a "stalk or hide to ambush". Then, at a time of the Bear's choosing, the "stalk or hide to ambush" may be followed by a "rush and tackle" often followed by move to turn back and finish you off. They will claw and bite you while you are down.

This could also be described as: Run up from out of nowhere and "mow you down" {or tackle or knock you down}. Then, after knocking you over or tackling you turn back to claw/ bite/ maul... "Kill"... and at the leisure of the bear "eat".

According to all knowledgeable sources {including people who live in bear populated areas} Bears will kill and eat Deer, Turkey, Elk, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, fox, moose, caribou, seals, squirrels, rabbits, berries, fruits, and "people". Bear are not particular about which animals they will kill and eat. Bears "if not shot" or killed by humans will lose all fear of humans. Alaskan Grizzly, Polar and Kodiak bears, "even though they are hunted", do not always fear humans. Children cannot usually positively and effectively defend themselves from bear attacks.

Let the bear population expand until conflict with humans is excessive. This will give more citizens the opportunity to see and appreciate the bear.
NEED INFO ON BEARS THAT MAY NOT BE SHARED PUBLICALLY. IS THERE MORE THAN WE KNOW?
Already receive emails
I prefer snail mail that I can keep
I heard it tonight for the first time (regarding "Be Bear Aware" messaging) Because of tonight's presentation (regarding being more bear knowledgeable compared to a year ago) Thank you for the interesting presentation!
MDC Magazine (also)
same as I get it now
Excellent Presentation
I don't see where additional information is needed except maybe by MoCon. I can't see that my input is welcome if I can't say "Attaboy" This is the first time I've ever been asked would I like to see a bear.
I would like to start receiving MO Conservationist Magazine again
I really appreciate what the MDC provides, and I've always considered the agency a place that educates the public and helps wildlife. I would like to receive more information and get more involved in a positive way. Please - stop the bear hunting season so that I can continue to respect the MDC.
MDC denied it in 2010 when we started seeing bears.
Talked pretty fast...hard to understand. Sound was kind of muffled or something...echo...sort of hard to understand. Nice presentation, she was familiar with materials and not glued to powerpoint. Nice booths with info-good length of presentation. Enjoyed getting more info individually.
I didn't know about MDC's Bear Aware messaging until today.
I usually read the "Conservationist" cover to cover.
Thank you for doing this program
I believe MO has a wonderful conservation program. always great info in magazine and great online information.
Public information through the internet.
Thank you for this program and educating the public. Bears and all predators are not monsters, nuisances but very important to a healthy ecosystem.
Thank you
My current impression is that information is reaching those who are actively searching for it. I would recommend considering outreach channels into additional adjacent spaces.
How many bears are collared?
I am almost sure I am on your e-mail list. Once you came and talked at the Kirkwood Garden Club.
tonight's speaker was excellent and very knowledgeable.
thanks for the open house people need to be educated.
Not sure where to write this-As a retired educator I can't emphasize the importance of getting out the message to students-primary and on up though school assemblies and programs. Kids are great at getting the message and will teach their parents. You would hit a broad audience

understand Be Bear Aware message after the bear talk (Great presentation)
thank you mdc for giving education and peace of mind towards the presence of the black bear populations as it grows in numbers. Understanding the behaviors of black bears makes me feel more confidence and safe during our outdoor adventures...
the data needs more thorough examination and no lethal management methods should be on the table without a coordinated, robust education plan has been in place for at least 5 years.
Thank you for this. Laura was fabulous presenter. Kudos for second presentation @ 7 pm. Well done
Thanks for your public information sharing. I believe humans speaking to humans is best way to effectively get information to public.
Now I wasn't trying to be a jerk enjoyed the show but do feel this way about a lot of things in the state I live in
Please keep up the great job you do MDC!!!
Thanks for providing this program. It answered the questions that I have regarding bear. I'm glad to see the questions regarding harvesting if the population gets too large. Thanks.
Thank you for an excellent conservation department. One of the best in the U.S.
all
Social media can get blown out of control. Uneducated people freak out to easy.
Social media waste too much time wadding through self-serving, fake news! Don't use it!!
keep up the good work!
Really interested in bear interaction while camping, hiking and backpacking. Educating Scouts BSA etc. for safe encounter
IF HUMANS DON'T FOLLOW THE RULES THEY NEED TO BE FINED BIG MONEY GETTING INTO THEIR POCKETS WILL STOP IT.
Keep the bears and bears safe-why? Because once there are gone what next-think about it harvest bears limited number to keep them healthy and safe.
Just use common sense!!

Appendix C

Draft of the Black Bear Management Plan

DRAFT Missouri Black Bear Management Plan

Missouri Department of Conservation



July 2019

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DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

The black bear is an increasingly significant wildlife resource in Missouri and while they disappeared from the state for a number of years, black bears are native to Missouri and represent an important part of our ecosystem. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has authority and responsibility to maintain and manage the black bear population. As with many large game species, black bear management presents a number of opportunities and challenges ranging from providing the public recreational opportunities to minimizing and addressing human-bear conflicts.

The Black Bear Management Plan was developed cooperatively between MDC's Black Bear Task Force, and representatives from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service. This plan identifies critical components of a multifaceted approach to management of Missouri's black bear population and provides strategic direction for the MDC's black bear management program over the next 10 years. By clarifying the MDC's bear management goals and objectives, this plan provides an opportunity for critical input from Missouri citizens on the future direction of black bear management in Missouri. This plan does not outline operational details (regulatory frameworks, specific research proposals, etc.), which will be implemented through established MDC processes.

Previous plans have focused on gaining an understanding of Missouri's black bear population, including determining a baseline population estimate, habitat use, and established range. Great strides have been made in this regard and it is now clear that Missouri has an established and growing black bear population. Sighting reports continue to increase and occur in new areas, a baseline population estimate was produced, and reproductive parameters are currently under evaluation to model population growth into the future. Missouri's black bear population is no longer considered vulnerable. MDC is experiencing a paradigm shift in black bear management from gaining base knowledge of a returning bear population to managing a growing and expanding bear population, including increased public awareness of bears, expanding bear distribution, increases in nuisance activity and increasing public desire for harvest opportunities.

Black bears occur throughout much of the eastern United States and Canada, including areas with dense human populations. In many areas, bear populations continue to grow and expand in range. In a survey conducted by bear managers in the eastern US and eastern Canada, 68% of jurisdictions reported increasing populations. Hunting is the primary tool for managing bear populations and 66% of jurisdictions allow bear hunting. Seventy-six percent of jurisdictions consider reducing or managing human-bear conflict as an important management issue (Eastern Black Bear Workshop Jurisdictional Survey 2019).

HISTORY OF BLACK BEAR IN MISSOURI

Black bear were historically abundant in Missouri, but were seemingly nonexistent by the early 1900s. Many early county histories contain notes and reports of the remarkable number of bears in all areas of the state. Bears were a staple item for early settlers and were widely used for food as well as for their fat and skins. In fact, bears were more commonly killed by pioneers and early travelers than any large mammal, other than deer (McKinley 1962). However, by the 1830s and 1840s, bears were rare in north Missouri, and by 1894, bears were reported to be almost extinct in the Ozarks. Schwarz (1920) reported the bear was still present in southeastern Missouri in 1920, and they were “occasionally seen in the Bootheel” until the flood of 1927 (Godsey 1933). One of the last records of a verified wild bear in Missouri (during the early 1900s) came from this area, one killed in 1931 (Bennitt and Nagel 1937). McKinley (1962) reports no claims of bears being present in the Ozarks during the 1890s-1950s, other than rumors during the 1940s and 1950s. He acknowledged, however, that some rumors may have been reliable, and cites two incidents of bears killed in the Ozarks during the 1950s.

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission initiated a black bear restoration program in 1959. During 1959-1967, 254 black bears were captured in Minnesota and Manitoba, Canada and released in the Ozark and Ouachita mountains of western Arkansas. Since that time the Arkansas population expanded in both size and distribution. Following the Arkansas reintroductions, sightings of black bear began to rise in Missouri, with some bears undoubtedly coming into Missouri from Arkansas.

From 1950 – 1972 there were 54 occurrences of bears in 27 counties in Missouri. In 1990, a request for sighting information published in the June Conservationist magazine resulted in 55 reports of sightings in 26 counties. Over the last 2 decades, reports have increased substantially. From 2000 – 2010, MDC received 512 bear reports in 75 counties. From 2011 – 2017 MDC received 1,341 bear reports in 87 counties. Reports are not verified, and likely include some percent that are misidentified, but in general, the distribution and number of bear reports is steadily increasing.

CURRENT STATUS OF BLACK BEAR IN MISSOURI

Initial population research, which began in 2010, suggested a 2012 statewide estimated population of just under 300 bears. Based on bear sightings, and initial population monitoring, the bear population is growing and expanding, but the current growth rate is unknown. In order to model statewide bear numbers and estimate population trajectory, MDC began a project in 2015 to measure reproductive and survival rates of female bears in Missouri. Reproductive information will be incorporated into a population model which will be used to predict the growth and trajectory of Missouri's black bear population. Current plans are to propose a limited harvest once bear numbers exceed 500 animals, a benchmark which was established in the 2008 Black Bear Management Plan.

MDC BEAR PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

Use science-based methods to manage a self-sustaining population of black bear, a native species, while minimizing human-bear conflict, increasing bear awareness, and providing recreational opportunities for all Missourians.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Use science-based methods to manage a self-sustaining population of black bear, focusing on research and monitoring, population management, and habitat management.

- Objective 1.1: Use science-based methods to understand and manage black bear populations at multiple scales.
- Objective 1.2: Use research to establish biological and social carrying capacities for black bear populations within Missouri and seek to maintain those numbers through regulated harvest.
- Objective 1.3: Utilize research to understand black bear habitat use at multiple scales to better inform management decisions.

Goal 2: Use human dimensions to inform management decisions related to recreational opportunity, and public opinion, interest and understanding of bears.

- Objective 2.1: Utilize public surveys and other human dimensions methods to understand values, opinions and support of recreational activities related to black bear in Missouri.
- Objective 2.2: Use human dimensions techniques to understand the public's knowledge and opinions on black bears in Missouri.

Goal 3: Minimize and address human-bear conflicts.

- Objective 3.1: Actively promote proactive measures to prevent/minimize human-bear conflicts.
- Objective 3.2: Address human-bear conflicts.

Goal 4 – Increase statewide awareness of Missouri's black bear population and management program through coordinated outreach.

- Objective 4.1: Implement a coordinated in-person outreach program at the statewide level and within targeted geographies.
- Objective 4.2: Implement a coordinated multimedia outreach program at the statewide level and within targeted geographies.

Appendix D

Handouts and Posters



Open House Objective

Inform Missourians about black bear research, management and conflict issues. Solicit feedback on the goals of Missouri's Black Bear Management Plan, as well as gather opinions on Missouri's bear population, potential for hunting opportunities and experiences with and perceptions of human-bear conflict.

Open houses 6 – 8 p.m. with a presentation at 6 p.m. No registration is required.

July 9 — MDC Springfield Nature Center
4601 S. Nature Center Way in Springfield

July 11 — The Landing
110 Front St. in Van Buren

July 18 — First Baptist Church
202 Walnut St. in West Plains

July 30 — MDC Powder Valley Nature Center
11715 Cragwold Road in St. Louis

About You

Your Name: _____

Your City: _____ Your ZIP Code: _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age: ☐ Under 19 ☐ 20 to 34 ☐ 35 to 54 ☐ 55 to 74 ☐ 75 and older

Do you consider yourself a hunter? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How did you hear about the Black Bear Open Houses?

☐ Newspaper ☐ Radio ☐ *Conservationist* Magazine ☐ MDC website ☐ Social media
☐ Other website ☐ MDC employee ☐ Friend or neighbor ☐ Other

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is a name I can trust. (Check one)

☐ Strongly agree
☐ Somewhat agree
☐ Neither agree or disagree
☐ Somewhat disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

Be informed and get involved. Learn more and share comments at mdc.mo.gov/bears or send your comments to MDC Public Involvement Coordinator Michele Baumer at Michele.Baumer@mdc.mo.gov, or 573-522-4115 ext. 3350.



Goal 1: Use science-based methods to manage a self-sustaining population of black bear, focusing on research and monitoring, population management, and habitat management.

Goal 3: Minimize and address human-bear conflicts.

Overall, do you feel the goals and objectives of the Black Bear Management Plan are reasonable?

☐ Yes☐ No[illegible]



Black Bear Research and Management

- Missouri's bear population is growing in size and expanding in range.
- Research indicates that Missouri is home to approximately 540 – 840 black bears.
- The 2008 Black Bear Management Plan established a benchmark of 500 bears needed for initiating a hunting season.
- Hunting will be the primary tool for managing bear populations within the levels of social tolerance and habitat availability.
- The Department will begin deliberations relative to establishment of a bear hunting season.

Have you seen a black bear in the wild in Missouri? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you like to see a black bear in the wild in Missouri? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why? _____

Do you think the black bear population should be allowed to grow? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why? _____

Do you have concerns with the range of black bears expanding geographically to other parts of Missouri? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why? _____

Do you support or oppose having a highly regulated, limited hunting season when the Department of Conservation determines the bear population has reached adequate levels to allow hunting?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Why? _____

Would you be interested in harvesting a black bear? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Additional comments: _____



Managing Human-Bear Conflict

- Human-bear conflict is increasing with the growing bear population.
- Attraction to food is the most frequent source of human-bear conflict.
- Removing or securing food attractants is key to preventing the majority of human-bear conflicts.
 - » Bring in birdfeeders.
 - » Keep trash secure trash. Store in a secure outbuilding, secure container, or behind electric fencing. Put trash out the morning of pick-up.
 - » Do not leave pet food or livestock feed out unattended. Store pet food or livestock feed in secure outbuildings, secure containers, or behind electric fencing.
 - » Protect bee hives with electric fencing. Be sure fencing is maintained.
- Bears are long-lived and have an exceptional memory. They will often revisit locations where they received food.
- MDC has tools available to aversively condition persistent bears. Aversive conditioning discourages a bear from returning but may be temporary. Removing the attractant is required to ensure bears do not have continued access to food.
- If you experience damage or nuisance activity from a bear, contact your MDC Regional Office or your local Conservation Agent.

**Have you ever experienced damage or nuisance activity (any type of unwanted activity) from a bear?
If yes, check the box for each type.**

Please check all that apply. ☐ Bird feeder ☐ Deer feeder ☐ Trash ☐ Pet food ☐ Bee hives
☐ Livestock ☐ Camping ☐ Other (please describe: _____)

Please provide any details: _____

If you had a bear visiting your bird feeders, would you remove your feeders to stop feeding the bear?
☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, why? _____

If you had a bear accessing your trash, would you attempt to modify your trash management (put out the morning of pickup instead of the night before, use a secure container, store trash in a secure outbuilding, use electric fencing, etc.)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, why? _____

Additional comments: _____



Be Bear Aware

- Don't feed bears – intentionally or accidentally.
- Bird feeders, garbage, pet food, grills/smokers, etc. can attract bears to homes – remove or secure these food attractants.
- If you see a bear, enjoy the encounter from a distance, give the bear an escape route and never run.
- When camping or hiking in bear country, be bear aware. Store food in secure containers, keep a clean camp and keep cooking and sleeping areas separate.
- Report bear sightings to the Department of Conservation.
- If you experience damage or nuisance activity from a bear, contact your MDC Regional Office or your local Conservation Agent.

Which best describes your overall impression of communications from Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)?

Please check one. ☐ Keeps us fully informed ☐ Keeps us fairly well informed ☐ Keeps us adequately informed
☐ Gives us only a limited amount of information ☐ Doesn't tell us much at all about what's going on

Are you familiar with MDC's "Be Bear Aware" messaging, which shares information on what to do if you encounter a bear in Missouri?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

Compared with a year ago, how would you rate your knowledge of black bears in Missouri?

Please check one. ☐ Much more knowledgeable ☐ Somewhat more knowledgeable
☐ Same level of knowledge ☐ Somewhat less knowledgeable ☐ Much less knowledgeable

From which of the following sources do you now receive most of your information from MDC?

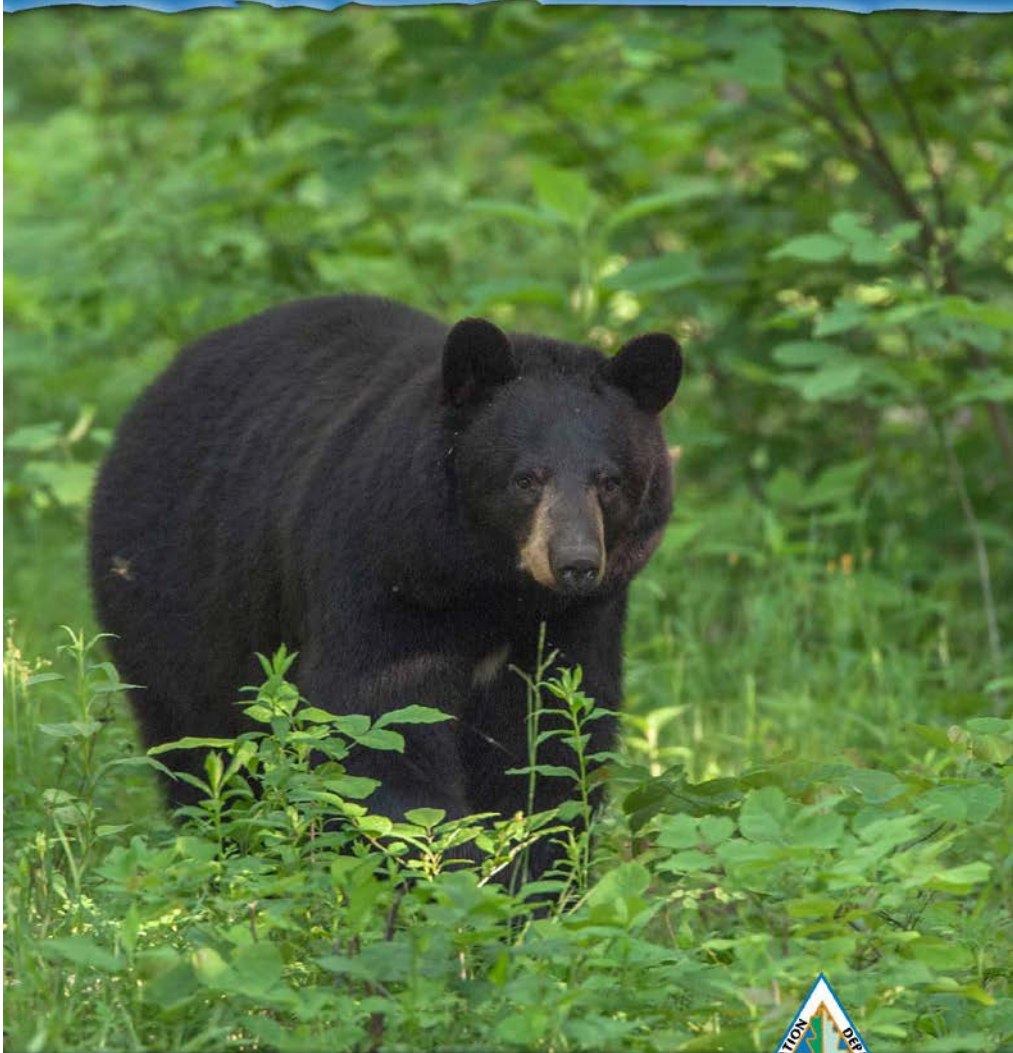
Select your top three communications channels. ☐ MDC news releases ☐ *Missouri Conservationist* and/or *Xplor* magazines ☐ MDC social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube
☐ MDC emails or texts ☐ News stories from local media (daily or weekly newspapers, radio stations, television, etc.)
☐ MDC publications and/or regulations books ☐ MDC website ☐ MDC events ☐ Family or friends
☐ Other (_____)

How would you prefer to get future information from MDC on black bears (updates, research, regulations, etc.)?

Please check all that apply. ☐ Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) ☐ MDC website (mdc.mo.gov)
☐ MDC programs or events ☐ Email ☐ Text alert ☐ Other (_____)

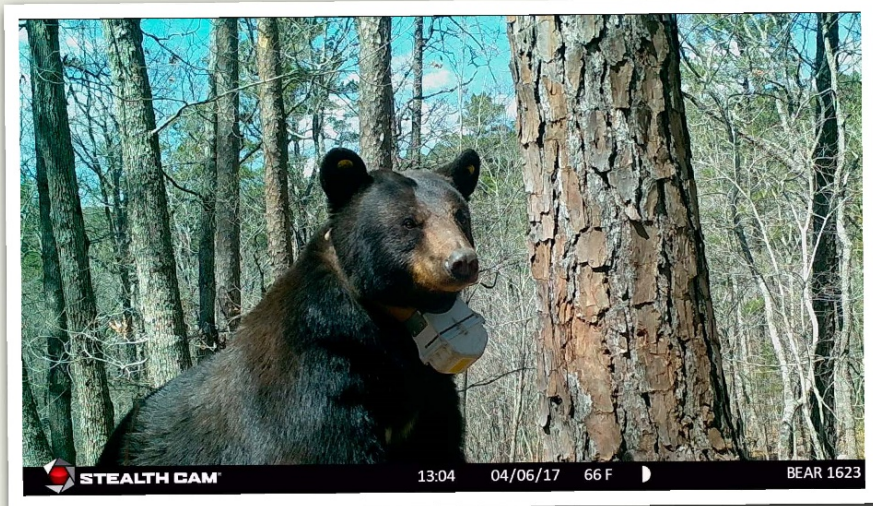
Additional comments: _____

Welcome



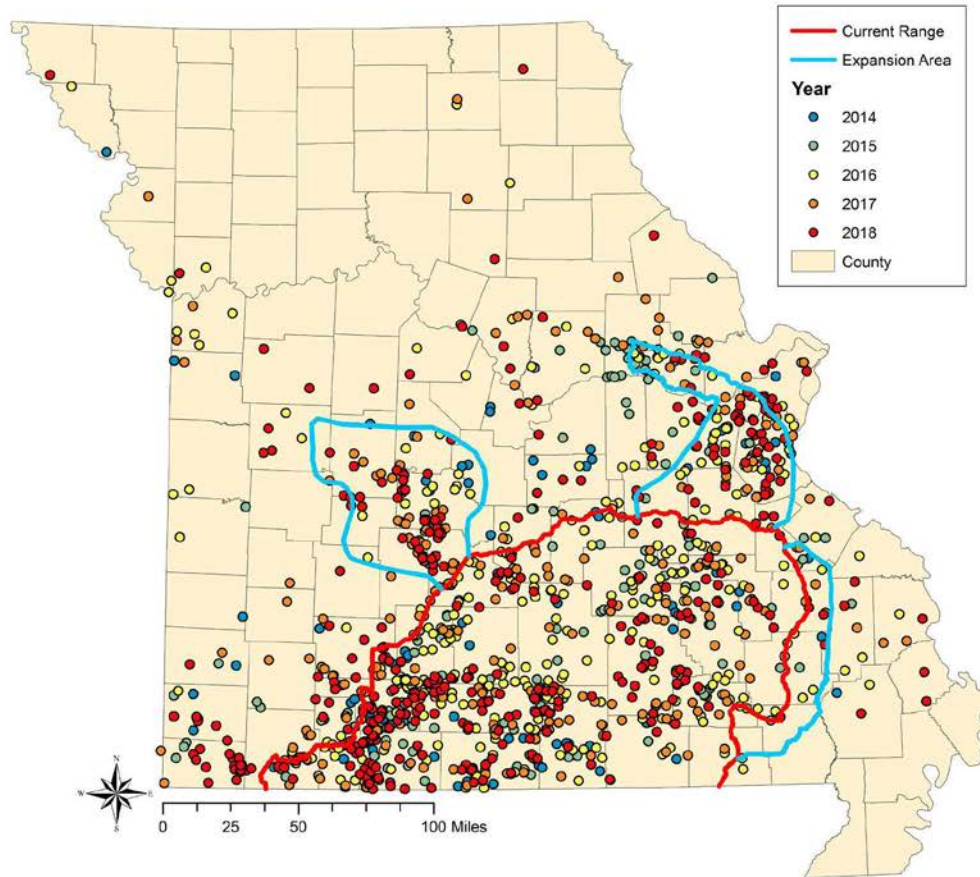
Serving nature and you

Black Bear Research and Management



Serving nature and you

Black Bear Sightings 2014-2018



Serving nature and you

Managing Human - Bear Conflict



A bear's keen sense of smell will bring them in to investigate bird feeders - even if they are empty.

Bears can destroy bee hives in search of food. They prefer larvae over honey.

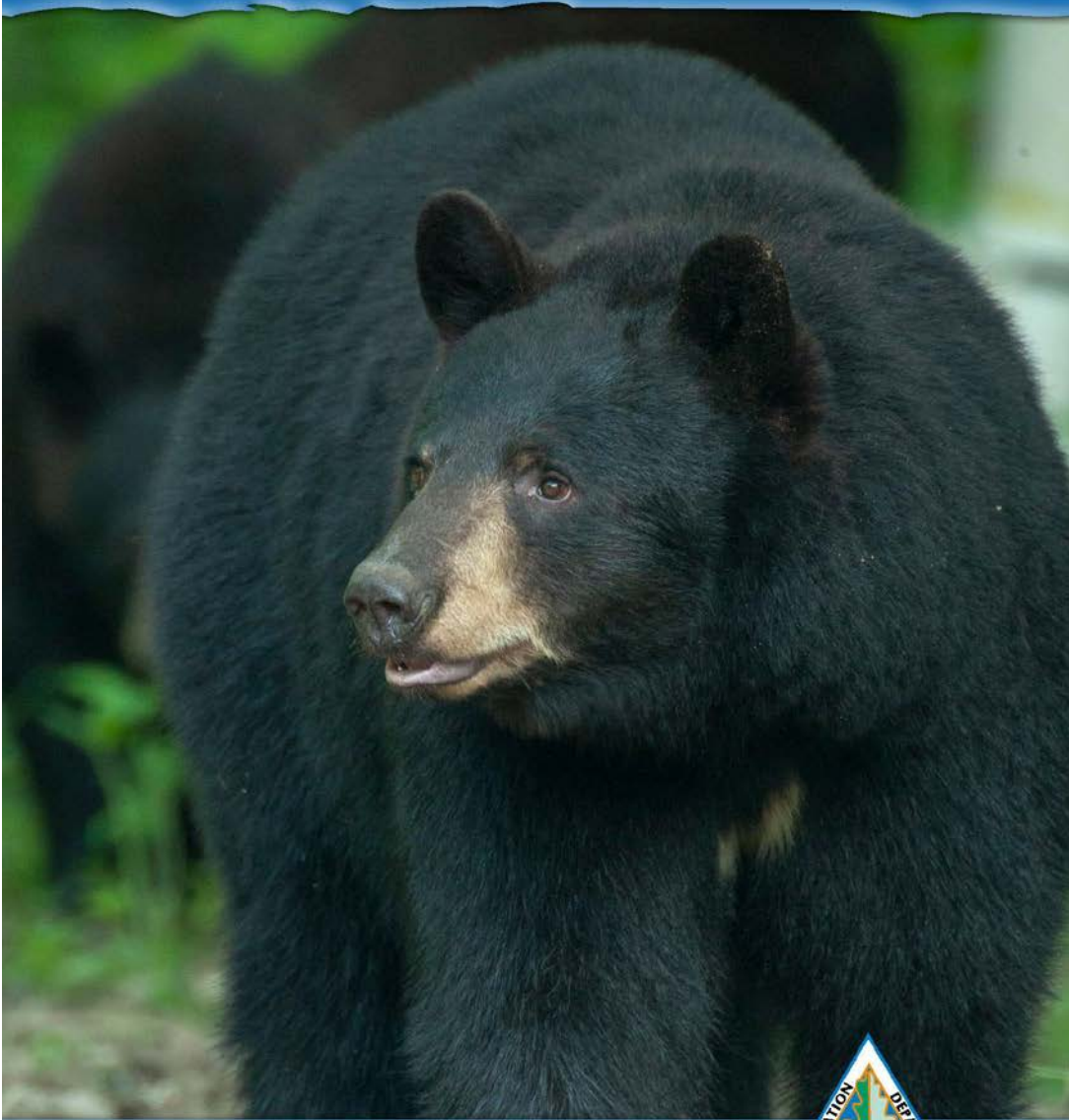
Use electric fencing to protect bee hives.

Strap hives to a secure base to decrease damage if a bear knocks them over.



Serving nature and you

Be Bear Aware



Serving nature and you

Thank You



Serving nature and you

Appendix E

Photos of Open Houses

Springfield



Van Buren



West Plains



St. Louis

